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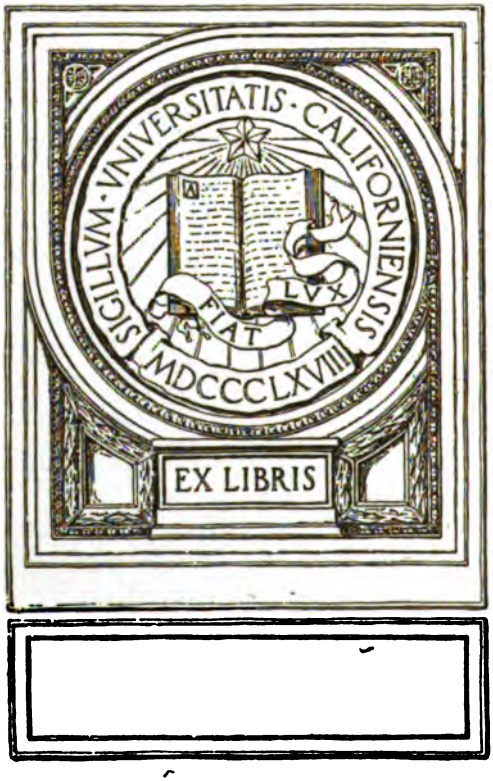
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TWO YEARS UNDER THE CRESCENT

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"HADJI" WRIGHT

SHEIK MAHOMET LABRAM
From Masrata tribe, "Sons of the Sabre"

TWO YEARS UNDER THE CRESCENT

BY

H. C. SEPPINGS WRIGHT
AUTHOR OF "WITH TOGO"

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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BOOK I

TRIPOLI

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RE-INFORCEMENTS FOR THE SULTAN.

UNIV. OF
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TWO YEARS UNDER THE CRESCENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

As I sit at home once more amidst the welcome comforts of peace, contrasted with the exposure and privations of the desert, and review my many years of campaigning, nearly all the world over, I cannot but feel that my most recent experiences in this direction have been in many respects the most remarkable of them all.

I have been through greater hardships, I have perhaps encountered greater dangers, but I have never before been through a campaign where, in spite of all the modern facilities of communication, in spite of all the generous supply of newspaper correspondents from the world over, centralised within the comparatively limited area of conflict, there has yet been communicated to the world at large so small a proportion of accurate information regarding the origin of trouble, the progress of events, and so many deliberate and intentional misrepresen-

tations made for the obvious purpose of still further weakening the weaker cause.

I undertook this commission from the Central News with a perfectly unbiased mind, and I honestly believe it to be in that condition necessary to equitable judgment at the present moment. I had had previous experience with troops of nearly every nationality, and knew something—in some cases a great deal—of their individual characteristics, but of Turkey and the Turk I knew absolutely nothing. Indeed, I may perhaps go to the extent of admitting that if I had formulated any ideas about him at all, from books, from newspapers, or from hearsay, I had, in common with many other misinformed people, quite unconsciously received an impression not at all in his favour. To an extent I would explain this by remarking upon a notable characteristic in his nature, one for which I must admit a certain amount of sympathy—that is, an absolute indifference to outside opinion. Not self-satisfied conceit by any means, but a settled conviction that his actions have been so far instigated by what he, rightly or wrongly, considers to be right principles, that he feels justified in politely ignoring criticism from anyone whom he feels to be unable to sympathise with his motives. It is not altogether an undesirable trait either; at all events it is preferable to hypocrisy.

But however undefined my opinions of the Turk may have been before this campaign began, they are now very definite, very pronounced, and what has

influenced them I wish now to set forth, without any excuses and without any embellishments. In the course of the relation of my narrative I shall sincerely endeavour not to give expression to any sentiments or any feeling which I cannot justify by the introduction of facts and circumstances, well substantiated.

It may not be out of place to say here that it is quite impossible for any man or woman at home to have the faintest conception of, or to make any adequate allowances for, the unspeakable horrors of war. The conditions of warfare are not normal, and they cannot be judged by normal standards. To an alarming extent, quite irrespective of nationality, human nature becomes human nature no longer; sexual distinctions, even the reverence and affection universally admitted to be due to old age and to youth, become temporarily obliterated from a brain, the senses and feelings of which are no longer under natural control. Everyone who has had the slightest experience of warfare will be in a position to justify the truthfulness of this seemingly alarming statement, and it cannot be too strongly emphasized, particularly to anyone who has heard of some terrible instance of cruelty and torture, and whose mind, naturally revolting against its perpetrators, instinctively conceives a bitter hatred towards the nationality which its perpetrators happen to represent. The point at which I want to arrive is that it is most certainly not a fault of any particular nationality, it is purely and simply

the fault, or failing, of human nature temporarily abnormal. If it is assumed by the reader that I am suggesting excuses for any one of the nations involved in the conflicts from which I have just returned I would like to correct that assumption at once, for I most certainly am not; for whilst I have, from actual personal experience and observation, found them to be equally guilty of cruelties and outrages which, if I dared to relate them, would appal the reader with their horrors, and which only can be explained by the reasons which I have ventured to suggest, I have also witnessed many acts of humanity and tenderness which at any time, and under any circumstances, would be a credit to mankind. It will be within the memory of many of my readers, that one of the greatest painters of modern time was expelled from the country which he represented, and the exhibition of his pictures absolutely forbidden there, because his portrayal of the terrors of warfare were so vividly and faithfully realistic. It must also be borne in mind that racial differences are trivial in comparison with religious variances, and to a large extent this has been a religious war, than which there is no influence in the world so powerful, so disturbing. With these few preliminary remarks, very important in their way, I will begin my story.

CHAPTER II

TO TRIPOLI, THE UNKNOWN

My journey from London to Tunis in September, 1911, was uneventful enough—its continuation from there to Sfax equally so. Sfax seems to be the end of all things to the traveller sensible at all to comfort, as the railway terminates there. Ahead of me was the seductive illusion of green fields and olive groves, which I knew only too soon gave way to the wastes of the desert; to my left the blue waters of the Mediterranean. My destination of course was Tripoli, or as near to it as any means of conveyance would carry me. I had Zwarra in my mind as a desirable spot, but it was some 250 miles by water, and at least another hundred or so by land. Their respective disadvantages were put before me by those whom I took into my confidence in no particularly encouraging manner.

By the land route the likely danger to be encountered was one or another of the prowling bands of Arab brigands, naturally restless and disturbed by conditions of war, and more likely than usual to act upon the offensive, unless the escort were adequate for defence. At sea there were at least seventy Italian boats—battleships, cruisers, torpedo boats,

and others—keeping a ceaseless vigil for any contraband of war, and as my credentials consisted entirely of a letter of introduction from the Turkish Embassy in London to the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces outside Tripoli, it did not seem likely that any one of them who might happen to waylay me would consider me to be in every respect the most desirable person to be allowed to proceed.

Sfax is an ancient walled seaport, earlier associated with piracy, but as its more modern attractions include a fairly good hotel, I made my way there to consider my future movements over the present material considerations of a good meal. It was the last of its kind for many a day. Circumstances seemed rather to suggest the sea route as being the one easier to arrange for, and as this coincided more with my inclinations I was not loath to encourage them. A servant at the hotel told me of a friend of his, to whom I was subsequently introduced, who, with his brother and two sons, ran a small six-ton boat which happened to be at that moment in the harbour. Their interests were fishing and the collection of a grass called *halfa*, from which is made ropes and matting. For both of these industries they had local rights, so that they were fairly well known, a circumstance not altogether in favour of my project, which indeed for the moment I was not anxious to confide to them.

Mohammed, the captain, was a thick-set, pleasant-looking Arab of about sixty years of age. I com-

mented upon his genial and rotund appearance, and he assured me that he had little else to do than to get fat. He had a house and gardens in Sfax, and three wives to look after them, with plenty of time to eat sweetmeats and enjoy themselves. In spite of all this affluence the bait of a sovereign tempted him to consent to take me with his crew for a night's fishing to the two Kergulan Islands, the banks of which were included in his fishing rights, and which lay some thirty miles off the coast.

We started about ten o'clock, a beautiful starlight night, with unfortunately little wind. We were not allowed to drift out of the harbour without observation, for we were immediately followed by the Customs steam launch, which hailed us and asked our business. I told them that we were going to get the nets off the islands, and they appeared to be satisfied. Once out at sea I felt that my journey had started in real earnest, and wrapping myself around with my overcoat as best I could, I settled myself down to a somewhat restless night in the open boat. It was not particularly cold, but I was glad enough to feel the warmth of the rising sun, and sorry enough to find that, although we had a good supply of food on board, we had forgotten to bring any coffee. Mohammed endeavoured to console me with the assurance that there would be plenty of coffee, plenty of everything, upon the islands; in fact from his description I imagined that we were going to be refreshed at some place like a Tunisian open-air café.

We arrived at the smaller of the two islands about noon, and anchored a little way off the shore. Our boat only drew a few feet of water, so that one of the crew very quickly waded ashore and secured a small boat that was lying there. The landing-stage was most primitive, consisting of large tied-up bundles of grass, which gave a very insecure footing. Once landed we started off to find the village, which, the captain assured me, was about two miles inland.

It was tiring walking—a cloudless sky, burning sun, and hot sand into which the feet sunk and held. Of herbage there was very little, a blade of grass to every square yard or so. There were a few sheep about, but what they feed on I cannot think. If they rely upon the grass I imagine that they would have to perambulate an area of about thirty miles to collect enough for one meal. There were clusters of date palms, but the fruit was only half ripe—nice to look at, but horrible to taste. The palms grow from six or ten feet to fifty feet high, so that the fruit from some of the smaller trees was easily accessible. To the many people to whom this delightful fruit is only known as it is sold in this country, it would come as a surprise to know how it is constantly consumed where it is grown, before it is fit to eat. I picked some here; it was then late in September. They broke off quite short, and in taste were acrid in the extreme. I wanted refreshment badly, but not of that order.

We soon came in sight of the village, a typical

Arab collection of one-storied, flat-roofed houses, built of sun-dried mud bricks and rough stones. A motley collection of human beings came out to meet us. It scarcely seemed possible, but very few of them had ever seen a white man before, as it appears that the islands have not the best of reputations, and indeed there is little reason for anyone but a native to call there. Followed by a procession of loafers, Mohammed escorted me to his boasted café, which was closed in consequence of its owner's indulgence in his midday siesta. I was glad enough to sit down outside and rest under its shady wall within a crowded semicircle of admirers, whilst the boys were sent off to hunt for its proprietor. He was soon discovered, and came hurrying along, full of apologies, with the key of the broken-down shanty in his hand. The main room was furnished with rough high benches around the walls for those who elected to avail themselves of their use, and matting upon the floors for those who preferred to recline. We selected the latter, and whilst we had our coffee the Sheik, or head man of the village, was sent for, that he might be intimated of the arrival of an unexpected visitor. He had probably heard of it, for he appeared almost immediately, dressed in the picturesque combined garment of head-gear and cloak, called a *hram*, invariably worn by the Arab, varying little excepting in size and quality.

He received us with an enthusiastic welcome, a welcome that instinctively put me upon my guard,

fortunately for myself, as I will relate. His hospitality was profuse, considering the limitations of the bill of fare. He was determined that we should eat together before we parted, and as I was exceedingly hungry I was not reluctant to avail myself of the suggestion, and I was not particularly critical of the dish. It consisted of a concoction of mullet prepared in a stew-pan, seasoned with a great deal of pepper. We boasted no cutlery, so that on the principle that fingers were made before forks, we proceeded to use them to the best possible advantage; and I may add that, under the circumstances, we succeeded very well indeed. The conversation was interesting, but necessarily somewhat limited, as my contribution to it was in French, and that not of the best, to one of the boys who conveyed it, more or less literally, to my host in Arabic.

As the afternoon wore on, and it was near sunset, I became anxious to resume my journey; indeed I might say start it, as this visit to the island was more or less in the way of a subterfuge. Directly I gave expression to the desire my host insisted upon sending for donkeys, and as I had no wish for a repetition of the sandy walk, I thought it an excellent suggestion.

I sauntered around this quaint village whilst the animals were being found, and was interested in the discovery of a building in the course of erection, particularly as the large stones necessary for the purpose were being carried from some distance by

three or four women. Upon inquiry I learned that this was the extended residence of a somewhat wealthy merchant who had gone away to purchase a new wife, and that this extension of the building was for her accommodation. As the masons themselves appeared to be somewhat lethargic in their movements I had the curiosity to inquire as to their rate of pay, and was told that they had none at all, but simply worked for their food in return for their services. This circumstance appeared to me to excuse somewhat their lack of enthusiasm. After about an hour the animals arrived, wonderfully like circus donkeys, with saddles like small tables such as one has been accustomed to see performers jump upon through rings of tissue paper. But it was a great deal better squatting upon even such a saddle as this than tramping through the sand, so that I promptly mounted one of them.

When we arrived at the coast, as it was getting dusk, our small party was augmented by a most undesirable individual, a sinister-looking person with a cast in his eye, who appeared to be on quite familiar terms with my host. The meeting was obviously by arrangement, but there seemed to be no excuse for failing to return courtesies extended, so I invited them on board to have whatever meal we could prepare at the moment. It was not at all bad either, a dish known to the Arabs as *cous cous*. It is a mixture of semolina flavoured with saffron, and anything edible is introduced without further qualification. Fish,

fowl, vegetable, and ground, corn with oil, salt, and pepper for seasoning. All this is served up in one common earthenware bowl, and I should imagine it to be one of the most primitive dishes that has ever survived ancient culinary methods.

After the meal I gave my guests cigarettes and coffee, and I later wished that I had limited the liquid refreshment to that harmless and invigorating beverage. But in an evil moment I remembered that I had a supply of spirits in my baggage, and foolishly I produced a bottle of whisky and a bottle of rum. The whisky could not have been better, but the rum was indifferent, and it had a most undesirably enlivening effect upon my friends. The conversation may have been hampered by the unsatisfactory manner in which it had to be conducted, but it suffered from no lack of interest. At every fresh libation the Arabs became more and more excited, and when I saw the boy looking worried and confused, and when he failed to translate to me the voluble remarks which were being made, I began to become very curious as to their import. I leaned back and smoked my cigarette in silence for some little time, but when I found that the storm of words was rather rising than subsiding, without any comment I corked the bottles and locked them away in my bag. This action was not appreciated, and the sinister-looking scoundrel looked fiercer and more sinister-looking than ever. The Sheik looked a bit

dangerous too, so that with the idea of bringing matters to a crisis, and in the most casual manner that I could assume, I brought my revolver unobtrusively from my back pocket and proceeded to make a careful examination of it. It had the desired effect, for both the Arabs immediately sprang to their feet, the villainous-looking person making one jump from his seat in the boat right into the sea and waded quickly ashore, whilst the Sheik with small ceremony of leave-taking followed him in the boat. We were only a hundred feet or so from the shore, and when they had landed they began, with many gesticulations, shouting to Mohammed. I did not like it, and insisted upon knowing something of what they had said, and also insisted that we should lift the anchor and get off at once. Mohammed was so reticent as to the nature of the conversation, and his account of it so obviously untruthful, that I tackled the boy, and it was not until violent threats had been added to the demands that I induced him to say anything. He then told me that the Arabs had suggested that I was a wealthy Englishman travelling for pleasure, and that I probably had plenty of gold in my possession, which indeed I had. They wanted at once to overpower me and cut my throat, but apparently the sight of the revolver frightened them. They evidently thought either that I understood something of what they had said, or that I guessed their purpose. I

further elicited the information that when they had called out from the shore they had told Mohammed that on no account must he leave the coast, as in the morning they would return armed, and with further assistance to accomplish their purpose. I turned to Mohammed and told him without much flattery what I thought of him, and what I would do to him unless he set sail immediately. He protested that he feared this Sheik, and the consequences of disobeying him, as he was a powerful and influential man.

I gave him clearly to understand that I had more interest in my own future movements than concern as to the possible consequences to him, and that unless he lifted the anchor and set sail at once I should most certainly shoot him. I emphasized the argument by again fondling my revolver, and it apparently persuaded him, for in a very short time we were sailing quietly away from the island in a pleasant breeze. It was a fine night, and I felt disinclined for sleep. My confidence in Mohammed was not very secure either, and I was anxious to lose no more time before explaining to him what I wanted, and persuading him to give me his assistance.

He listened with gesticulations of dissent as he gradually realised what I required. It was impossible, he said; the chance of being detained by the Italians was practically a certainty, and the journey was too long and too dangerous. But I used all the persuasive

appeals that I could invent, and I backed them up with an offer of another five sovereigns, which I produced and jingled, to the one which I had already promised, and eventually to my delight Mohammed reluctantly consented to chance it.

CHAPTER III

TO THE SOUND OF THE GUNS

BUT the fates were against us, for the next morning, when about twenty miles from the islands, and whilst still in the shallow water of their banks, the wind veered round to the east and rapidly increased to a gale. To add to the misery it began to rain, steadily and persistently.

This craft, which I have not previously described, was an open boat of about twenty-five feet long. It certainly had a small covered forecastle, but it was little protection, and indeed it served as the receptacle for anything and everything that was in the way elsewhere. The only cover possible was formed by the thwarts, the wide seats across the boat, and, as can be imagined, it was not much shelter from a penetrating east wind and a driving rain. The rudder swung loosely on rope bands, and altogether I should think that she varied little from the primitive crafts of two thousand years ago.

We were anchored here, with little variation as to these miserable weather conditions, for four days, and I do not think that ever before have I experienced a more hopelessly wretched, tedious, irritating four days in the whole of my life. The feelings of anxiety to get

on, and the inability to do so, were distracting in the extreme.

We were provided for a month with a good variety of food—tinned beef, sardines, butter, jam, &c.—but I thought it wise to exercise some economy, as the source of further supplies was doubtful.

The octopus formed an occasional dish, but they are not exactly a delicacy, although of course only the feelers are eaten. They vary in size; those which we caught were perhaps two or three feet in their extreme measurements. They are found sometimes, of course, as long as ten or twelve feet. The feelers are only eatable after they have been beaten with clubs for some three hours, and then they are not very palatable.

Towards the end of the fourth day the wind and weather changed, and I could have shouted with pleasure when we drew up the anchor and set sail eastward. The blue sky and sea, the delightfully warm sunshine and the pleasant breeze almost obliterated from my mind the memory of those four days of misery. I wanted to bathe, but they assured me that there were many sharks in those waters. I laughed at the idea, but when I was divesting myself of my clothes Mohammed's brother forcibly threw himself upon me and restrained me from fulfilling my intentions. I was very thankful that he did so, for just at that moment the largest shark I have ever seen cut right under our bow. I saw a number later, another one particularly large, and it is a very singular

circumstance that I should see the two largest I have ever seen, in the Mediterranean, where many people would repudiate the suggestion that they existed at all. I can only suppose that they came from the Indian Ocean through the Suez Canal. I found a chunk of bacon and a big hook and tried to get a bite, but had no such luck. I left my line and bait fastened to the stern, but in the morning it was gone. I rather think that Mohammed was responsible for that, as he would think it unlucky to have the unclean food attached to his boat, and probably cut it adrift.

The previous day when rummaging amongst the provisions which I had brought with me he had discovered this detested meat, and accidentally touched it. With a prayer to Allah for forgiveness he rushed to the forcastle and drew bucket after bucket of water before he was satisfied that he had washed away the malign influence of this evil thing.

Three days after our enforced idleness off the islands I had my first sight of Tripoli; a faint line it looked, shimmering in the hot sunshine between sea and sky. A little later a very serious difficulty presented itself in the shape of an Italian cruiser. We happened to be passing over the sponge beds, and Mohammed applied the circumstance to a very useful purpose. The cruiser was stationed at the western limit of the blockade, her duty of course being to prevent any boats from landing contraband of war, which I personally would have been considered.

Mohammed proposed that as the risk of capture

was considerable, and as such an event would mean disaster for us all, I should lie concealed in the boat, whilst they, the crew, were making a pretence of fishing for sponges.

He reminded me that I was in European attire, and that the Italians had sharp eyes, and that already we were probably under observation. Then, he said, should Allah give us a fair wind, when night came on we might get through to the harbour of Boukermesh, some twenty-five miles off which we were lying. The monotony of that day can well be imagined as I was lying at full length in the bottom of the boat, curiosity tempting me, almost beyond endurance, to take a peep over the side to discover what was going on, and prudence forbidding me to do so. We had no chance whatever of flight, even had we so desired, for the cruiser's guns would quickly have reduced our little boat to matchwood. On the other hand, if the suspicions of the Italians had been for a moment aroused we should, beyond a doubt, have been taken prisoners, certainly not released until the war had ceased, and poor Mohammed would probably have lost his boat.

These were my cheering contemplations the day through, whilst my outlook consisted of the patch of blue sky above me and the bronzed figure of Mohammed with his hand upon the helm. Relief came with the night, for a slight mist crept up, and under that and a fair breeze we sailed over the dangre line. It was impossible, however, to enter the harbour

at night-time, for the tortuous channel winds between sand-bars, which can only be seen in the daylight. In the early morning we were more fortunate, and soon after the sun was up we were within a few miles of the harbour, which is a most beautiful spot, a natural harbour formed by a sand-bank ten miles long. The water is crystal clear, showing the clean sand at a great depth. There is vegetation in patches, and the number and variety of the birds—wild geese, duck, flamingo, and many others—made me wish that my mission had been game shooting instead of what it was. There in the blazing sun was the fort which I was given to understand was a stronghold of the Turkish forces.

Beyond it, against a blue sky, and standing upon a sand-bank at least fifty feet high, was the mosque which marked the last resting-place of the revered Sheik, Sidi Said.

To the east a faint trail of smoke marked the position of the Italian cruiser as she steamed slowly off upon her beat as far as Zwarra. At least that destination was a fair assumption, but she might turn at any moment, certainly if the look-out happened to discern us within a suspicious distance of the shore. Our next consideration being the rapid decreasing of this distance, I proposed to Mohammed that we might proclaim our interests by hoisting the Turkish flag. He raised no objection to this, as the cruiser was nearly out of sight, and his suggested fears of the place being deserted were soon dispelled.

Through my field-glasses the movement of figures upon the fort could be distinctly observed moving rapidly about, obviously interested in our approach. So that in the morning sunshine we ran up our flag to the masthead, and for the first time in my life I found myself under the Turkish colours. It was of little interest to me at the moment, but in looking back since that morning the incident has been, many and many a time, a most memorable one.

Before noon we cast anchor, and a little later I was deposited with my baggage upon a small ruined causeway.

The commander, an Arab, in white garments and wearing a Turkish fez, came to meet me. He appeared to be surprised that neither Mohammed nor myself could communicate anything to him, either as to my wishes or my desired destination. I shook him by the hand and said two words, "Fethy Bey," and stood there feeling like the Saracen maid calling for Beckett in London. Mohammed supplemented this by mentioning Zwarra. Now it happened, as I afterwards discovered, that Fethy Bey was supposed to be in Zwarra, and that my new friend was an Arab sergeant, who with only half a dozen others defended this harbour against any attack that the enemy might make. The Arab is always hospitable, and the first thing that he was anxious to do was to introduce me to the fort and his companions its defenders. Fortunately I had coffee and sugar, although tea is always preferred, and with this

light refreshment and my cigarettes, which still further enhanced my popularity, in a very little time I felt as if we had been friends for years. Before we had been seated half an hour a caravan of camels sprung up, it seemed from nowhere, and a few minutes later I was arranging to buy or hire the whole lot, which consisted of four camels and their drivers. My luck again held good, for this caravan had just arrived from Zwarra bringing provisions and stores, and moreover was just returning there. After some bargaining they consented to convey me and my baggage there for the modest consideration of twenty shillings, an offer of which I very quickly availed myself, with the smallest display of gratification that I could assume. My new friend the Arab sergeant, having delegated the poor protection of the fort to his comrades, insisted upon seeing me in safety to Zwarra, the next post, where he believed Fethy Bey to be. Now I understood from Mohammed that Zwarra was only about fifteen miles away. And so lightly and carelessly I started upon what proved to be more than a fifty miles journey.

Not a particularly comfortable one either, for it was vastly different to my other experiences of using a camel as a means of conveyance.

In Egypt I remember years ago travelling many hundreds of miles seated luxuriously upon a Mharri or riding camel, where the gentle movement of the animal was almost conducive to sleep, but on this journey all my interests were centred in an anxious

endeavour to maintain my equilibrium. The method of loading the creature is simple if somewhat insecure.

First of all your baggage, and any other incidentals that the animal may have to carry, are perilously perched upon its back. When it is quite impossible to pile up any more you then mount the load and carefully balance yourself upon the heap as best you can.

It has the undoubted advantage of being exciting, but very little else to recommend it. The camel has no bridle, and no girth but ropes; but it has a net arrangement around its body, something like a capacious holdall, into which you might hope to have the luck to fall if you had the misfortune to lose your balance.

I thought that the journey by water had been monotonous, but this, with its discomforts, was even worse. Twelve hours without a halt over rolling sand-hills, with an occasional glimpse of the sea between the dunes. We were all armed, the Arabs with antiquated rifles slung across their backs, and their belts well supplied with ammunition. That such precautions are very necessary here it was quite evident, for we passed several small parties of devilish-looking brigands, who would undoubtedly have molested us had it not appeared to them that we were fairly well able to protect ourselves.

About sundown we arrived at an old Roman well, which, judging by its appearance, had served its purpose for many a century. Two Arabs who owned

it were waiting there for chance patronage, so that we halted, and refreshed both ourselves and the animals. They gave us dates too, but they were no better than those in the island, and we gave the camels the doubtful benefit of their consumption. I was very interested to notice that the rough troughs by the well were mostly of hollowed date palms, probably as ancient as the well itself. They reminded me of the old elm water-pipes which are sometimes dug up in London, for like these the date palm wood never rots.

We did not halt for long, for the sergeant pointed to the setting sun as a reminder that we had no time to lose, and we were soon off again upon our journey. There was no twilight, of course, and as soon as the sun went down the only light was that of the stars, and the pale crescent moon low down in the sky. About three hours after sunset we came to what appeared to be an endless plain. The silence was weird, for our camels made scarcely any sound as their huge feet fell lightly upon the soft sand. Now and again in the distance we heard singing—some hymn of praise to Allah; for the Arab, as the Turk, is as likely to forget his meals as to omit his devotions from his daily life.

With the night came the dew, and, in contrast to the day, it was intensely cold. I was very glad when, about one o'clock in the morning, we reached Zwarra with what seemed to me to be almost tragic suddenness.

Univ of
California

THE OASIS.
TRIPOLI.

CHAPTER IV

ITALIAN BOMBARDMENT OF ZWARRA

My impression of our arrival was that a great arched doorway seemed to swallow the camels one after another, and then, my turn coming, I passed through into a small courtyard, where some trees were growing and several dark forms were rapidly unloading the camels.

My sergeant friend managed somehow to secure a room for the accommodation of myself and my various luggage. It was not luxurious, but at least it was a shelter. There was no light and there was no air available, excepting by leaving the door open, for there were no windows or openings of any sort or description.

Before I had settled down someone was hospitable enough to send me some tea, for which I was very grateful, and in spite of the lateness of the hour I soon had a number of callers. A few of them with the only excuse of undisguised curiosity, for they simply peered round the door to inspect me and retired again without saying a word. One or two Arab women paid me this compliment. One of my male visitors happened to know a little French, and we settled down to a very interesting conversa-

tion. I managed to convey to him who and what I was, and carefully represented to him what great people the Central News were, from which I got of course a little reflected glory.

He congratulated me at having got so far, in spite of the fact that I was a European, for he told me that the Arabs feel that all Europe is against them, and would naturally regard me as an enemy.

Whilst we were conversing a Turkish orderly presented himself, and he was the first Turkish soldier I had ever seen. He came to request my presence at headquarters, for Zwarra had a garrison, and was commanded by a Bimbashi. I immediately followed my conductor, accompanied by my visitors and various loafers who happened to be awake, indeed quite a triumphal procession. And so we made our way along the silent street like shadows, for the soft sand gives no sound to the beat of the foot. In the darkness too I stumbled now and again over objects, animate and inanimate, and finally we plunged into the intense darkness of a grove of date palms.

We made our way through this bewildering blackness for a mile or so, when we arrived at a brilliantly lighted building, where I was at once escorted to a room in which were seated about half a dozen Turkish officers. They stared at me in undisguised astonishment, and it seemed to me that my appearance could not have given them greater surprise had I dropped from the clouds. They asked me to be

seated, and when I said that I was hungry, they fed me with "œufs au plat," excellent bread, and water to drink. Coffee followed, made as only the Turks know how to make it, and some very fine cigarettes. I told my story, and after a conversation, which of course I could not entirely follow, they intimated to me, through the orderly, that they believed it, and that they would wire to head-quarters at Tripoli for instructions concerning me.

I retired to rest that night very willingly, and with bright hopes for the morrow; but I was just dozing off into a state of happy oblivion after my tiring day when the reports of two big guns, followed by the screams of shells, brought me up with a jump. Almost as suddenly the room became full of Arabs and Turks, gesticulating and arguing in a state of the greatest excitement.

Crash! Bang! the deafening reports continued incessantly.

The Italian bombardment of Zwarra had begun.

Hurriedly dressing, I joined, so far as I was able, in the council of war that had been so hurriedly convened. Musa Bimbashi, the commander, perfectly cool and quiet amidst all the excitement of the others, began giving orders in a low sweet voice that sounded almost lover-like in its modulated tones. For him the welcome sound of the guns meant battle, for there is no Yemen Arab who is not a born warrior, caring more for the clash of steel and the smoke and roar of battle than anything else in the wide world.

Their love of fighting is positively fanatic, and they believe most sincerely that all their sins are pardoned and cleansed when they lay down their lives in fighting against an enemy to their faith.

We sat down to our consultation, Musa taking the chair at the head of the table, whilst on two large Turkish divans squatted cross-legged a number of Arabs, none of whom had I seen before, but who were introduced to me as the Sheiks and notables of the district. Before we began each and everyone placed his right hand upon my heart, a motion which I followed, as an assurance, it appeared, of their acceptance of me as a comrade and friend. Coffee was served, even under these exciting circumstances, and a grand pow-wow started as to what was to be done. But the firing eventually dropped as quickly as it had begun, and for the remainder of the night we were left in peace.

We were not to be left alone next morning though, for quite early Tewfik Effendi, the scoutmaster, came dashing up upon a fine chestnut Arab horse, to report the news that two Italian warships were rapidly approaching. The wailing notes of the bugles sounded the assembly, bringing all the garrison very quickly to the square; a fine, well-disciplined body of men they were too, dressed in kharki and wearing the kep or tarbush, with imitation astrachan trimmings. The officers wore well-fitting tunics, riding-breeches and putties, and were distinguished by six gold stripes cartwheel fashion on the top of the

tarbush. Musa, the commandant, looked very stately and dignified. The mask of indolent carelessness which every oriental affects, scarcely concealed his fiery, ambitious and tempestuous nature. The gleam in his hawk-like eye plainly denoted the autocrat and absolutionist. A face terrible in a way, but yet one to inspire absolute trust and confidence. A magnificent friend, as I am now proud to claim him to be; a very bitter foe, as the Italians now know to their cost.

I later realised why it was that, severe ruler as Musa was, his men were always ready and willing in their devotion to their leader to do positively anything under his command.

I watched the approach of the warships with interest, those colossal engines of destruction, as they ploughed their way in ominous silence through the blue water. The square was rapidly filling, as now the Arab warriors arrived, marshalled in some sort of order by their Sheiks and mounted upon their magnificent Arab steeds, whose silver and brilliant trappings glittered and tinkled to the play of those lovely creatures, children of the desert. I found them always to be regarded as one of the family, living as they do with their owners as domestic pets. I will describe a typical Arab warrior, a description that will fairly well serve for them all.

Sheik Abdullah was mounted on a tall white charger, the trappings and housings of the Arab saddle being of solid silver. The plates of the breast-strap give forth a pleasant music as they clash in accompani-

ment to the motion of the steed. Full of spirit, like all the Arabs, Abdullah is a master horseman, reining and spurring with shovel-shaped stirrups. The high-spirited animal curvets and rears with blazing eyes and dilated nostrils, as if challenging the enemy. The Arabs formed up in their own peculiar manner, not very regularly, and with much noise and shouting. But the discipline of the chief is soon brought to bear, and they move off in a fairly orderly body, longing to meet the foe. What on earth they expected to do, armed with Mausers and with no artillery, I cannot for the life of me imagine. Ridiculous as it may appear to be, these fierce warriors were going off to fight Italy's battleships equipped only with spears and rifles.

"Voulez-vous regarder, monsieur?" I turned and found a tall, dark, handsome Arab in Turkish uniform addressing me.

"Avec beaucoup de plaisir."

Ali Effendi, a Lieutenant of Infantry, as I found him to be, then told me that he had orders to look after me and see that I had a good show to report on the great valour and courage of the Turkish army. Ali explained to me that having to join his company would prevent him from personally accompanying me, but that he had provided an orderly to carry my water-bottle and do any other little devoir; also to take me to some position where I could get a good view of the combat.

I found that the Italians were expected to land,

eat up all the poor defenders, and camp that day in our quarters.

I set off accordingly towards a small blockhouse or marabout just about three miles away. The battleships remained stationary, firing a few wretchedly placed shells at the building for which we were making. And as we drew near, with a shout of "Allah Ackbar," the Arab battle-cry, there came rushing a shouting multitude, utterly regardless of the shells, to the poor shelter of the blockhouse. I very soon caught the infection of excitement and ran with the crowd, wondering what would happen, but indeed nothing very terrible took place. The hillside seemed to blossom with Arabs, all squatting down so closely and crowded together with their rifles in hand, that it seemed impossible to walk along without stepping upon them.

We waited and watched the ships deliberately steaming round, evidently trying to reconnoitre the position of the small harbour which this cape guarded.

Why they did not blow the whole lot of us into eternity was then, and ever will be, a marvel to me. To my intense relief, and the intense disappointment of my companions, they then steamed away to Tripoli.

I so soon became accepted as one of themselves that as we sat down in friendly council I pointed out to them that this method of attack would never do. I spoke most feelingly on the subject, and they were very anxious to get my meaning. Doubling up my

two fists, I tried to make them understand that should a big shell drop into the closely-packed mob, we should all be *morts*. Sheik Sultan through an interpreter wanted to know what it was that I so strongly advised.

I made a number of holes in the sand, and so got him to understand that separately, should the bomb come, only two or three could possibly be hit, but that if a shell fell into a crowd of them the result would be terrible in the extreme.

To this the Sheik said, "Very good, but the Arabs don't fight like that."

So ended the first of a long term of bombardments. Zwarra is a big important town, as the chief caravan route passes through it on the way to Tripoli; moreover, it is the first of a great number of water-bearing oases, so welcome and refreshing in a desert journey.

It could not only be defended by land, but the guns of the ships could keep the Arabs at a respectful distance; at least, so the Italians thought at the time when they began the conflict.

After this little excitement we got a respite and a few days of social life, and I got to know something of my friends. The barracks face the sea, but they are partially concealed by groves of date palms, whilst a barrier of sand-hills make a most efficient defence against an attack from that direction, affording as it does the most perfect cover from shells. The thick tops of the palm trees, too, give some protection against the most deadly shell of all, the shrapnel.

Every Arab town has its bazaar or bargaining centre. "I want to make bazaar" is a most common expression, meaning of course to deal or to bargain.

This important centre has its café, where the latest news is earnestly discussed. In the afternoon I wended my way through the winding main street in company with Ali Effendi and two other Turkish officers. On the shady side of the little square sat Musa Bimbashi, together with various notables and officers, whilst Achmet, the coffee-maker, made his round serving coffee from his small long-handled pan; and a crowd of beggars and Arabs of all descriptions formed an admiring circle around this central figure, for the autocratic Musa likes to see all his subjects about him, and they certainly have to "toe the line" when he is anywhere around.

These pleasant afternoons were spoilt by the reappearance of the Italian men-of-war, and they anchored right opposite the headquarters, as if determined to keep us on the *qui vive*. The bombardment began again, sending shells at all hours of the day until our house became quite uninhabitable, and we had to spend our time down amongst the sand dunes. This was all right and very jolly for a short time, but it became monotonous, for the only recreation was when the guns ceased firing; and we would creep up, well screened by bushes and date trees, to have a look at the ships, wondering when our punishment would be finished for the day.

Looking back now, I really marvel at the chances

we took, returning at night to sleep in the shell-battered rooms, and not leaving them in the morning until the warning shells hissed and screamed over the barrack square. Rain we had too, and plenty of it. This added to the misery of it all. Nights spent in the trenches under such conditions represent about the lowest depths of physical misery that I can possibly imagine.

CHAPTER V

SHELL DODGING

NOTHING surprised me more than the complete and absolute disregard of danger which was displayed by my companions, and their undisguised and profound contempt for the enemy. They were always longing for the Italians to land some troops, and have a chance of a fight, and they did all that they possibly could to lure them into doing so. Whatever may have induced the Italians to hold back, it is certain that the Arabs and the Turks put one construction, and one construction only, upon their reticence, and that was sheer funk and arrant cowardice.

"They are not men—they are not soldiers; they can only fight children." "They are timid, and more timid than sheep." These and many similar remarks expressed the intensity of their feeling in the matter.

They wanted a show; they wanted some excitement, and were spoiling for a fight—the thicker the better.

One morning when I was sitting in the sand dunes, in the midst of my monotonous day-dreams, I heard the sharp crackling of rifle-shots. For a moment I thought that my friends had at last succeeded in

luring their prey to land, and as quickly as I could I began crawling through the sparse scrub in the direction of the sound of the firing. There in front of me, with the shrapnel shells literally falling like hail, and bursting in all directions, I could scarcely realise the scene that met my astonished gaze.

In the hottest spot of any three fearless Arab warriors had set up a target, and were having a shooting competition, like a miniature Bisley. Carefully and deliberately taking aim at their target, with shouts of pleasure when they scored, and the shells bursting all around them, they themselves were all the time the target of the Italian gunners.

Their Sheik—Sheik Zittan—noticed me, and came laughingly towards me. He said that his men were excited, and found it so unendurably slow with nothing to do, that they had to give vent to some of their superfluous energy by shooting at something, whatever it might be. We were fairly well sheltered where we were squatting, so that I took out my pipe and filled it, but could not get a light, as the wind was so high.

The Sheik, seeing my difficulty, called to one of his men, and pointing to the case of a shrapnel which had just exploded, he said:

"Bring it here, oh my son."

The man brought it along, still hot from its discharge, and, holding it to shield my pipe from the wind, he said:

"Now, father, light your pipe."

The firing soon became hotter still, for two more cruisers arrived, with the evident intention of battering the town down about our ears.

This time the principal fire was directed against the residence of Musa Bey and the officers' houses. Musa's home, standing high, soon crumbled under the nine-inch shells, and that of Captain Hassan followed. The pathetic part of it was that the women and children were in the houses at the time. It came as a shock to us all to feel that the women and children were not safe. Poor Musa stuck to his duty in the trenches watching the destruction of his home. The terrible anxiety of the man was painful to see. The orderly who was sent off to find out the extent of the damage took nearly three hours to cover a few thousand yards, crawling and creeping along through a perfect hurricane of bursting shells. The ladies fortunately, however, escaped, though naturally very frightened. The condition of poor Musa's wife at the time was such that the terrible shock brought on very serious complications, from which, however, she happily recovered eventually.

One night about this time Musa Bey said to me: "Would you like a ride with me to Rigdalenè? I want to go to visit my wife, who is unwell, and also others who are sick, and who are in charge of Hakim Demetrius."

I jumped at the offer, for I was getting somewhat weary of Zwarra and its perpetual bombardment.

The horses were brought round about eight o'clock.

It was already dark, but the sky gleamed with stars, which gave us quite sufficient light for our purpose, whilst fortunately there was not enough for our movements to be detected by the night-glasses of the cruisers.

Escorted by Tewfik Effendi and four zeptirs, or gens d'armes, we started off for the open desert at the back of Zwarra. The night air was still and heavy with perfume. The aromatic desert herbs are always fragrant, but on this particular night the perfume was delightful in consequence of recent heavy rains. Before we had proceeded very far upon our journey the moon arose, a great yellow disc in a purple sky, enabling us to travel more quickly and with greater confidence.

About midway between Zwarra and Rigdalenè the road runs between two high sand drifts, conical in shape, whilst at the back of them, on either side, there are a number of neglected gardens. As we passed along this broad defile there was suddenly the flash of a rifle ahead, and a bullet or two sang over our heads. We pulled up sharply, and Tewfik with his zeptirs were ordered to ride ahead and investigate the matter, whilst Bimbashi Musa followed more slowly. At some distance we came upon an innocent-looking caravan of camels striding like deformed shadows ahead of us in the misty moonlight. The zeptirs or gendarmerie had arrested the drivers, and they were bringing them back for the inspection and interrogation of Musa.

"Did you fire that rifle?" he asked sternly of one of them who was carrying a long gun.

"No, by Allah, I did not!" he protested solemnly.

Turning to a zeptir, Musa said, "Take his rifle and smell the muzzle." The man did so, and then handed it up to Musa. The smell of it immediately proved beyond question that it had been recently discharged.

If there is one thing the Arabs love, it is powder-play in any shape or form. He must fire his rifle whenever he can, at anything or nothing. Now firing rifles at night in any country in war time, where of course martial law has been proclaimed, is a most heinous offence. No one can tell whether it is a friend or a foe, and serious fights have often taken place between parties of friends, each having mistaken the other party for foes. Musa was a strict disciplinarian, and having repeatedly given the most positive orders that this practice was to be stopped, he was furious, both at the offence and the aggravation by the man's emphatic denial.

I shall not forget the men's frenzied prayers for pardon, nor Musa's stern, relentless face, as he forfeited the guns and personally chastised—none too lightly—the Arabs with his riding-whip. We had no further encounters, and soon rode through the arched door of the Fonduk, which is now used as a hospital. We were welcomed with enthusiasm, accommodated with rugs and pillows, and regaled with tea, coffee, and cigarettes. To me it was a most de-

lightful time, for although I could understand scarcely a word of what was said, the romance of the scene quite captivated me. The domed, dungeon-like chamber was lighted by oil lamps, which threw into strong relief the general furniture, the saddle-packs, and all the paraphernalia of war. Outside in the courtyard an emerald moonlight bathed everything in a soft mystery. The sleeping Arabs in their white robes, their horses standing drowsing after a full meal, whilst the orange glow of a watch-fire warmed the surrounding shadows.

Over the white walls the tall head of a solitary palm tree showed against the purple sky like a sentinel, each delicate leaf with the clearness of a silhouette. I reclined comfortably against soft cushions, feasting my eyes on this dream-like picture of Oriental life.

Later on I enjoyed the soundest sleep, once more untroubled by the hungry boom of guns. The beauty of the scene, however, changed somewhat in the searching light of day. It revealed much squalor and filth, but it was picturesque still in spite of it. I felt hungry, but, Arab fashion, we stanched our appetites with the thick aromatic coffee of the East and the inevitable cigarette.

Starting on our homeward journey, we rode slowly along until the boom of heavy guns reached our ears once more, and the smoke and dust of bursting shells half hid the town of Zwarra from our view. The shells were bounding over the sand, falling miles

inland. The soft sand preserves their life frequently, for very many failed to explode. Avoiding these unwelcome visitors by making a long detour, we eventually reached Zwarra by the lower caravan track, down amongst the dunes, where the remainder of the day and the whole of the following night were spent, crouching among sandhills and scrub, with never a particle of food for four-and-twenty hours.

The following day two Turkish deputies arrived from Ain Zara. One had been preaching the Jehad to the Arab contingents; the other one came for the purpose of carrying back to the authorities at Stamboul a faithful report of the general situation, and the condition of things generally. They had been in the saddle for twelve hours, and appeared to be so exhausted that they were almost too tired to talk with me. They expressed their intention of resting in bed all the day, and then riding at night to Ben Gardane. But they had little rest that day, as before they had retired to bed in the rooms at the barracks, which had been placed at their disposal, the Italian cruisers opened fire upon the building.

To give the reader some idea of the headquarters, I may describe the barracks as a long, one-storied building, standing in a small compound. The front of the building faces the sea, and is entered by a gateway over which stands the flagstaff, upon which the Crescent floats bravely. Two old-fashioned lanterns, very similar in appearance, which were

probably at one time used as stern lights in an old ship of the line in the days of Lord Nelson, adorn the pillars on either side.

Tall date palms shaded the compound from the sun. A short paved path leads to the terrace, which runs the whole length of the face of the building. At either end the house is entered by means of an arched doorway. My room was on the south side, whilst the room occupied by the officers and the two guests was situated at the opposite end. There was great scurrying as the shells began bursting overhead, officers running, buckling on their swords as they ran, in their anxiety to get the men out of the barracks down to the trenches. The wearied deputies turned out with alacrity, and as Ali Effendi came rushing towards me, together we bolted out of the room, and ran along the front just as a shrapnel burst amongst the branches of the tall date tree. Down came clattering bullets on the corrugated roof, whilst some of them knocked the plaster off the front of the building. Ali stumbled and fell against the wall, and for a moment I thought that he was done for. But he was up again in a moment, and together we had just reached the doorway of the opposite room when a big shell struck the chamber which I had left a quarter of a minute previously. The Italians seemed determined to shatter the place, for there had never before been such a perfect hurricane of shells. We made our way by a long detour through the palm grove to the north, to reach the shelter of the

trenches. I can hardly describe my sensations as I watched this most destructive of all the attacks. It seemed strange to me too, that the report of the shell exploding like a soft, well-modulated voice, could be heard actually before the sound of the gun. There were the elements of comedy too in the undignified scramble which we had to make.

One takes it as a matter of course after a few days' pounding, as one carcely realises that dangers and death lurk in the innocent, parachute-like puff of smoke, like the lightest of summer clouds. Our losses were small; indeed no one was actually killed, and only a few decorated, as they always describe being wounded. One officer had a very narrow escape, a shrapnel bullet going down through the lining of his coat and harmlessly finding a resting-place in the pocket. The Italian fire was very bad indeed. The horses and camels were placed in a small hollow, about one hundred yards to the west of the headquarters, and although shells were bursting close to them the only damage was done to the trees, and none of the beasts were hit at all, although the bombardment practically lasted the whole day.

I must not leave my experiences of Zwarra without some reference to the Club, which I sometimes visited there. The Turks are a clubable, sociable people wherever they are, and it is customary to have a rendezvous place whatever little convenience there may be. Perhaps it is a close stuffy room, or better still, as here, on the shady side of the square in

the open air. The square is irregular, and the houses follow its contour.

Some of the buildings rejoice in a stoep, much broken as a rule; others stand level with the ground. It was one of the better kind with the stoep that formed the meeting-place of the Circle, as we called it at Zwarra. Here, on most afternoons, Musa and his staff met, surrounded to suffocation by a crowd of worshippers, for Musa Mahomet was little short of an idol. There he drank his coffee and spent the rest of the day discussing the events of the time. Excellent coffee it was, too, and cost a halfpenny a cup. Sometimes he paid the Arab story-teller to tell us some Oriental romance, which used to remind me of Sinbad in the *Arabian Nights*. Story-telling is a profession, and a lucrative profession here. The tales he told I cannot repeat, because of my inability to follow all that he told us, but that they were of fascinating interest was obvious from the rapt attention with which they were followed, and the hearty laughter which followed the amusing portions of the narrative.

When the Italian cruisers gave us a few holidays the bazaar was crowded, and Mahomet, the proprietor of the café, became in great form, for business was good, as in old times before the war. One afternoon we were all sitting on the shady side of the square, when an Arab came up carrying a six-inch live shell which he had recovered from the desert, and which he was anxious to sell.

The way he banged it down before us gave me a start, for you can be at too close quarters when a shell explosion takes place. But no particular notice was taken by the others until I explained the danger of handling live shells so carelessly. Musa and the other officers were very curious to know what was inside, whereupon the Arab kindly volunteered to take the fuse out with a corkscrew! This was a great deal too much for me, so that I arose to go, explaining that I had no wish to continue my journey in a vertical direction, and that I was not going to risk my life in watching the operation. I then gave them a little lecture on the component parts, explaining them by means of a diagram—the amount and position of the explosive, the position and action of the fuse, and so on. Tewfik Effendi, an artillery officer, came up at the moment and at once confirmed all that I had said. Then I advised the owner of the deadly trophy to go and bury it. Whether he acted on my advice or whether it wafted him to paradise I don't know, but the last I saw of him was as he went staggering off under its weight, surrounded and followed by a crowd of curious Arabs.

I could write a great deal more of Zwarra, its beauties and its antiquities, but I must hurry on to tell of the more serious and more interesting and exciting fighting at Tripoli.

CHAPTER VI

I GO ON TO TRIPOLI

I LEFT Zwarra with many regrets. During the few short weeks that I had spent there I had made lifelong friendships with both Arabs and Turks, friendships which I shall always highly value. On the 20th October a telegram arrived from General Neshet giving me permission to join him at the Quartier Generale, and I lost no time in setting off.

The journey there, through the oasis, was perhaps the most interesting that I ever experienced. As I previously mentioned, Zwarra is the beginning of a string of oases along the principal caravan route leading to Tripoli. Like all Tripolitaine, the roads are mere tracks, depending upon the whim of the camels, each season new deviations being mapped out according to the herbage, which the animal makes whilst snapping at bushes and scrub *en passant.*

These roads, although fairly well guarded now, were at that time infested with many small bands of loafer Arabs, who are not altogether the most desirable people to encounter. Along the highway to Agelah is one especially desolate part, ideally situated for the operations of these knights of the road. Midway it is marked by an ancient Roman well, which has

never been repaired in any way since the time the Eagles of that Empire halted there. We rested during the heat of the day at this place. The camels browsed on a few tufts of esparto grass, and the Arabs and I refreshed ourselves with a drink of the cool water. My Arab guard, a youth of fourteen or fifteen years of age, unwound his waist-belt and tied one end of it to an amphora, which he lowered into the cool dark depths. I imagined that I could see the Roman hosts performing the same duties, in the same manner and at the same spot, thousands of years earlier.

I was travelling along the same road that they traversed then, and with only the same methods of transportation. After the noontide heat had somewhat subsided, about four o'clock in the afternoon, we made another start. Old Salim, my henchman, seemed uneasy at the lateness of the hour, for he said that the loafer Arabs lived on this road, and only a day or two previously they had plundered and murdered a party of Tunis merchants.

I did not pay much attention, knowing poor old Salim's nervousness at sundown. However, we did notice a band of four Arabs about two thousand yards off, keeping pace with our caravan, and undoubtedly prevented from attacking us by the fact that Salim and myself were dressed in the uniform of Turkish soldiers, and in addition to that we had one soldier with us as a guard. Salim warned me to look out, whilst the escort loaded his Mauser, and stepped boldly up to the Arab band.

They then retired, thinking perhaps that discretion was the better part of valour. Agelah is supposed to be eight hours by camel—six upon horseback—but somehow camels never seem to get up to more than 2½ kilometres an hour, and very often less than that, unless kept going at their best by the continual bullying of the drivers. At night too the pace seems to be less.

The outskirts of the oasis extend for miles, and one seems never to reach the end of them.

About ten o'clock the tired beasts landed us at the great gate of the post. After a good Turkish meal, we speedily forgot the fatigue of the long march. The limitation of space does not allow me to dwell on the beauties of Agelah, a straggling village half hidden by thickets of fruit trees and shaded by tall palms. Mud walls, crowned with cactus, divide the various gardens and effectually prevent the depredations of stray cattle, or of prowling robbers. These cactus hedges are a brilliant feature in the landscape. The thick leaves are fringed, just at that time of the year, with brilliant sun-dyed yellow, later the rosy fruit make a most effective pompon edging.

I must say a word of thanks to the kindly Kaimakhan, one of the best-looking Arab gentlemen I ever had the pleasure of meeting.

I threw myself on the cement floor and was soon lost to all mundane affairs in the sweetest sleep that I ever enjoyed, whilst my companions, the Turkish

officers, waited with stoical patience for the serving of supper. I could not resist the temptation of a short sleep, knowing as I did that the fish forming the repast had yet to be caught!

Time is nothing—of no value, of no consequence—in this serene country of Tripoli.

The Turkish officers talked after our supper about the necessity of reaching headquarters without delay.

"We shall ride through the night," they said, "if you don't mind coming along with the camels."

"All right," I replied laughingly. "You go on and give my respects to the Commander-in-Chief."

They certainly did start off about half an hour ahead of me, vanishing down the broad sandy dunes in a cloud of dust; but at Surman I heard of them only *one hour* ahead of me, and my pace was about 2½ miles an hour. Certainly not more.

The rate of travel here is counted by hours, regulated by the camel or snail pace. So many hours to this place or that, they tell you. The horse is supposed to make five to six miles an hour; but the Arab is liberal in his ideas of mileage, and you can safely add a couple of hours to any journey that they estimate for you.

To lovers of nature and of the picturesque such a journey as this must very strongly appeal. The stretch of oasis may be compared to a string of emeralds. The green beauty is so restful to the eye and mind, that one never wearies of gazing at the smooth lawns and park-like vistas. The heavy dark

green foliage of the fig tree, interspersed with the vivid scarlet blooms and brighter greens of the pomegranate, mulberries, purple and white, shade the draw-wells and carpets of vivid halfa and other garden products, softened in the near distance, as with a veil, by the grey-green of the semi-transparent olive.

It all makes an ideal background for the symmetrical figure of the graceful, gaudily-dressed Arab maidens, flitting from shade to sunshine like brilliant tropical birds. The tranquil scene is further sanctified by the musical notes of the mating dove, whilst the bracing effect of the pure desert air, borne on the breeze and blended with the ozone of the sea, make for those in search of rest and peace an ideal paradise. The spell will soon be broken under the stress of mechanical utility. Another, and one of the last of God's earthly sanctuaries, will be destroyed, but it is doubtful if it will add anything to human happiness.

These my day-dreams were rudely destroyed by the camel putting his long leg down a hole in the roadway, which it appears was the chimney of an underground house; for here the native burrows abound in the crumbling set of a limestone ridge which crosses the road. Who were this strange people, these troglodytes, who fashioned these subterranean houses? They are still inhabited, and simply furnished. A few pots and pans and a little bedding satisfy the primitive needs of this colony of cave dwellers.

We entered the outskirts of the important oasis of

Zarwia, generally rich in tobacco plantations, now entirely neglected. Through repeated natural beauties a narrow lane heralds our approach to the village. Hedges of cactus contract the view, and would be impassable were it not for the utilitarian camel literally eating our way through, owing to the economical habits of this beast, who dines as he walks along. The growth is thus kept to its proper dimensions, and the hedges trimmed as if by careful gardeners.

The bazaar, which you suddenly stumble over, is the most important in the district. Small booths shelter the dry goods merchants and their wares, whilst a venerable mulberry tree shades the vegetable market, the workers in iron and brass, the industrial units of the community, being relegated to the mercy of the blazing sun.

The stalls or shops occupy three sides of the square. The fourth towers by proportion, and consists of the Kaserne, or public building. A huge arched gate gives entrance to a compound and barracks; the prison, and all the buildings connected with officialdom, rest securely under these mighty walls.

A room upstairs accommodated me and my belongings, where I found to my surprise my friends, the "riders through the night." No explanations were offered, so that I did not ask for any. We just sat down and had our coffee together most amicably.

The conversation was most speculative, mostly of course upon warlike subjects, for the guns could be heard continuously and distinctly.

Next morning we all started again as before, and I was left to pursue my journey in solitude. At Zanzur we met again. The flashes of the Italian projections for some reason caused a deal of merriment amongst the camel men. They seem unable to realise the utility and the power of modern inventions. Everyone was glibly talking of the retaking of Tripoli with rifles and swords, of what loot they would get, and how the warriors had all come to get an Italian rifle to carry back to their homes. At this place the real business had begun before I started. I had to inspect and photograph the Zanzur contingent (reserves); a fine fierce body they looked too. Apologising for the smallness of his forces, the Kaimakhan explained that I should meet other regiments on the march to Gergorish and Fonduk Touar. We struck off now across the desert, and soon got involved in a maze of barren sandhills; but the Arabs seem to follow the blank tracks by instinct. We passed the encampment of Zarwia's legions, and struck the fonduk at midday. I was warmly welcomed by the commandant, an Arab Bimbashi, whilst a sumptuous repast was soon in course of preparation. Whilst waiting I walked to the top of the nearest sand dunes from whence the broad panorama of gleaming sand, palpitating in the rays of the noonday sun, quite pained my eyes; but the alternative view, the ever refreshing blue of the distant sea, cleared and cooled my vision. I saw Tripoli, a fair white arabesque resting on the

THE PILGRIM'S WAY, ZARWIA

A TYPICAL CARAVAN, TRIPOLI

AN ARAB CONTINGENT IN THE DESERT FONDUK

THE BAZAAR AT ZARWIA

verge. From a big grim gun-boat belched forth flame and wicked volcanic smoke, as she sent shell after shell hurtling through the regions of space it seemed against nothing in particular, unless it were the Turkish camps at Ain Zara, carefully concealed in the desert-hollow, and invisible even with our field-glasses. As to its exact position we could make out nothing, save that here and there were balloon-shaped clouds, the deadly messengers expending their forces in the air or on the sand. The fight was taken up by other ships lying concealed behind the minarets and domes of the city; a sausage-shaped captive balloon swayed about in the upper currents, presumably giving directions to the gunners. That plain of sand, I thought, as a means of protection, was worth fifty thousand soldiers, for we went back and enjoyed our lunch in spite of the fact that several of the big shells had buried themselves or burst in close proximity to the fonduk. One real danger we very narrowly escaped, a venomous snake, which was killed just outside the tent. Presumably the beast had been lying among the cushions and blankets upon which we now luxuriously rested.

A review was held later, and bringing out my camera I photographed these warriors.

I heard that my officer comrades were now four hours ahead of me, so that later in the afternoon we were off again. Towards sundown we saw in the distance the tents of Ain Zara. Heavy rain clouds were collecting, which the setting sun painted

with all the glowing reds and yellows of the subtropic. Salim, my henchman, was the first to call my attention to a balloon—"ballon" he called it. My attention was riveted on the battleship from which the captive balloon struggled, and also on the speculation as to where the next shell would burst, for we were now in the fire zone, and the ships' guns were in military parlance "searching" the plain. Our caravan must have been conspicuous, as we numbered by now something like fifty, and were escorted by two zeptirs.

I replied to Salim, "Yes, I'm looking at it."

"No, no, my mister! Dar oder way!" he explained in great excitement; and looking over my shoulder I beheld that marvel of modern ingenuity, the aeroplane scout. As I turned I saw this venomous machine change its course, and make directly for my caravan, and with great rapidity she approached. I tried to shout directions to everybody to spread out, but no one seemed to heed; my camel still doggedly strided along, and the Arabs seeming to be too interested in the flier to think of anything else, even their own safety. The aeroplane was so near to us now that the regular vibration of the Gnome engine could be distinctly heard, and it became louder and louder as it approached us. Presently it was directly over us.

"Tir! Tir!" I shouted to the zeptirs, at which they unslung their rifles and made some sporting shots; but whether they did any damage to the

machine or to its pilot I could not make out. As she circled she turned once more, and was making for us again, but when the Arabs opened fire it seemed to scare the pilot, for he passed us by and flew on to Ain Zara, evidently reconnoitring the various camps.

I gave my men a short lecture on aeroplanes, pointing out the vital parts, and telling them not to expend their bullets on the outspread wings.

Should they bring it down, they told me the Italians should be under my protection; they were not to be killed, but handed over to me to take before the commandant. However, she did not trouble us any more, but made straight for the town of Tripoli.

I must give some credit to the valour and pluck of these Italian pilots of aeroplanes. It is a big risk to take, for in case the engines fail them they have to come down; and in the desert they would probably starve, whilst if captured the chances were that they would have been shot.

CHAPTER VII

TO GENERAL NESHET'S CAMPS

"*Qui vive?*" cut the night air! "Oh, my mister, don't laugh, dere's bad man all time here!"

Salim's beseeching instructions were hissed out with quavering breath. It was really only the usual challenge after sunset; but Salim's fear struck me as being so comical, that I nearly rolled off my camel in an explosion of mirth.

"Oh, my dear mister, Mohommedan man no like it; he shoot for sure," he hissed in another compressed whisper.

We ought to have been taken prisoners as suspects, and in any army excepting the casual Turks we certainly would have been. Fancy taking the chance of blundering about in the dark amongst all those sentinels! But these dear kind-hearted stoics, with their entire lack of organisation, and their simple trust, treat the most serious incidents with indifference. Of course we pow-wow'd, and were passed on with little difficulty.

By ten o'clock that night I dismounted in the arms of my friend Alan Ostler, one of the riders through the night, who in the journey had beaten me only by about four hours. He showed some

anxiety on my account, as it happened that the loafer Arabs had been committing a number of acts of violence against unwary travellers. However, all's well that ends well.

Dinner was prepared, but before I sat down to eat I heard from Tahar Bey that a friend of mine lay in the hospital sick unto death. I set off at once on horseback, on a jaunt of only half an hour or so, spent some time in trying to cheer my chum, and mounted my steed to return. A cavalry man was sent to guide me upon the return journey, and he very nearly landed me into the Italian lines; and then we wandered, heaven knows where, until we had the luck to strike an Arab camp. Although these men had been fighting in the trenches all day long, one of them most cheerfully undertook to guide me back to headquarters, which I eventually reached, tired out, in the early hours of the morning.

The following day I spent in visiting the neighbouring camps. Owing to the constant shelling from the forts of Tripoli, and from the battleships, Neshet's camp was spread over a large area in small detachments, several of which I had to pass before reaching headquarters. They consisted of about a dozen bell tents, the hospital marquee being pitched some distance away to the south. The situation was picturesque, a little dell amongst large sand dunes, which sheltered it on every side.

The only danger was from the sky, but at that time the dirigible had not arrived, and bombs from

the aeroplanes were small; quite sufficient to create a scare, but not so deadly and destructive. Also the great elevation at which they flew presented the camp as a very small target.

The following day I reported myself to the General and Fethi Bey.

Neshet's tent was furnished with a bed and a couple of chairs, but no table. The Turks write all their despatches and orders, holding the paper in the left hand, and using the forefinger as a desk. A grey ammunition box captured from the Italians gave occasion for a mild joke. The General playfully said, "I'm going to give you some ammunition to eat," and opening the box he produced some excellent oranges and pomegranates which, with a smile, he handed to me.

General Neshet is a most unpretending and simple soldier. He is an old Turk. I mean of course "old" in the sense of being an adherent of the old legislation and the old government under Abdul Hamid. He carries his heavy responsibilities with the usual Turkish sang-froid, and is a good, humane just man, besides being a fine soldier. Indeed he must be, to have kept at bay for so long a time an army perfectly equipped and disciplined, and commanded by some of the first European generals.

The mere anxiety of it would kill many men, but he accepts his position as the will of God, and will willingly die in the last ditch; but surrender—never! Neshet is supported by a tried and trusted staff.

Fethi Bey, the chief of staff, is a quiet, pensive man, a politician, with the most charming manners, and was until recently military attaché at Paris. At the call of his country he cheerfully sacrificed the delights and comforts of the French capital for the hard stern life of the field.

There is also Djavid, a cultured gentleman; Ismail Hakki, a humorist such as one rarely meets among the Turks, who by nature and habit are quiet and reserved; Tahar, a dashing soldier, full of verve, the Brigadier Gerard of the Turkish army. They recounted to me their adventures and difficulties in crossing the frontier, and now there they were all together, a merry, hard-working party, taking life as it comes, and paying very little attention to the overwhelming black shadow looming with ever increasing blackness overhead. Fethi commands the Arabs, and lives at Suk el Juma, right under the guns of Tripoli. The work is difficult and dangerous, the alertness of the Italians rendering it unsafe to ride there during the day, but at night one can get through without having to dodge big shells.

I then paid a visit to Sheik Barouni, who greeted me most warmly, giving me an Italian rifle as a backsheesh. I sat long in his tent drinking sweet bitter tea and listening to stories of the prowess of his warriors, who crowded around the tent to see the strange Igleesi. His tent was of a Syrian pattern, which has scarcely been varied since the days of the Crusaders. In fact, the whole

organisation and travel in these parts seems to be exactly a counterpart of those romantic days. Cushions were placed to support my back, whilst the most expensive silken carpets covered the floor. The space was considerably contracted, used as it was for a general magazine, equipments and stores, &c., the silver harness of the Sheik's war horse, a capture from the Italians, taking up quite a quarter of it. Outside stood the greatest prize of the war, a battered piano taken from the Italians on some daring raid under the very walls of Tripoli. The whole tribe seemed to regard this as a sacred object. Its weight and shape made it a most difficult task to carry it upon the back of a camel, and yet before a move was made this unwieldy treasure had to be sent off, whilst, during one of our retreats, valuable kitchen gear was left behind to bring this cumbersome treasure safely along. As I saw it there, open and exposed to all weather, the ivory off many of the keys, and two camels calmly browsing off the strings, I wondered what its particular attraction could possibly be. But then we Europeans are sometimes apt to treasure the most useless articles.

I spent some time inspecting the bivouacking arrangements of these Jebel warriors. Tattered old bell tents lent by the Turks sheltered some, but the more fortunate among them lived in the old Bedouin style, in tents of camel hair, roughly woven, with an oblong strip fastened to the ground with pegs. It is finished off by sticking a pole up against the roof.

This gives head-room in the centre, but everywhere else one squats and crawls. They have this advantage though, that they withstand the sweeping desert storms, they are rain-proof, cool in summer and warm in the winter.

Some less fortunate soldiers had dug holes in the sand, and were sleeping peacefully in their *hrams*.

Forts and battleships kept up a constant shell storm over the neighbouring country, mapping out the desert into sections, each of which are treated consecutively to a constant baptism of fire. Some intuition seems to tell the dwellers in these sections when their turn is coming along, and they move into the neighbouring compounds.

All day long the rattle of musketry, the spraying of shrapnel, and the hammering of quick-firers goes on without any intermission. In the east of the town the palms and the gardens stretch as far as Zadjura, where the principal fighting took place with Suk el Juma. As a base, the Arabs have advanced their lines to within a few hundred yards of the walls of Tripoli. The Italians hold many of the gardens, each in itself a strong fort, as the thick walls of mud stop the bullets and fairly withstand the pounding of the field guns.

The mighty columns of the date palms are whittled through by the continuous hail of their bullets. The Arabs crawl through these trees to their shallow trenches, within a hundred yards of the compound walls. Singly they skip across the danger zone to crouch at the base, safely ensconced. Our one gun

pounds away until a breach is effected over their heads, and then together they make a rush through, and woe to any Italians who wait too long. Then they sleep in the captured position, amusing themselves during the night by shaking the boughs of the cactus, where the straggly boughs and thick oval leaves look just like human heads. Instantly there is a pandemonium of firing, simply hell let loose, whilst the warriors crouch at the foot of the wall in perfect safety and enjoy the fun and wasted ammunition. But there is some method and policy in this too. They have discovered that the enemy have nerves badly, and nothing is more trying to them than to keep these delicate organs always in a state of great tension, hourly expecting an attack, which may be delivered at any moment, or may not come for a week's time. Even should they succeed in reaching these massive walls very long ladders would be required to scale them, and then only to face hundreds of quick-firers lining the battlements. But nothing daunted our gallant army—absolutely nothing but the last great enemy—death; and I think that it was this element in their nature, amongst many other admirable traits, which unconsciously drew my admiration and my regard towards them.

Up to the feast of Bairam matters seemed to be going well. The Sultan sent his salaams to his heroes, and well they deserved the encouragement. But this celebration of the feast of Bairam was the cause of our undoing. Our Arab allies left in their

thousands to visit their families to eat the sacrificial lamb. This fact was perfectly well known to the enemy, whose spies of course kept them very well posted as to the doings of the Turkish army. During one eventful night the heavy rain very nearly washed us out of the hollow in which we had pitched our camp. Heavy firing went on all through the night, but nothing more than the average amount. We had made up our minds to have a really good rest and keep in bed until luncheon time. Some sort of presentiment, however, must have prevented us from sleeping.

The firing seemed to be more persistent that morning, and the curious snap of bursting shells sounded more distinctly. We tried to believe that this was caused by the humid atmosphere, in which sound travels more quickly. Salim sounded the first note of alarm in the following cheerful manner: "Dese Italian men no good men. Seventy thousand cavalry coming ober dere; eat all up."

We ridiculed the idea, knowing perfectly well that no army in the world possessed such a force. Still there might be some truth in the suggestion of an attack; such a flanking movement was quite possibly on the cards. There seemed to be an unusual stir and bustle amongst the tents, and knowing the casual easy ways of our friends, I concluded that it might be worth while to do a little private reconnoitring.

Alan Ostler agreed to ride out and seek for

intelligence, and whilst he was away I studied the different developments. I noticed that sentries were posted on all the neighbouring points of vantage. Now a galloper arrived, hot with news that seemed to have a disturbing effect upon the general and his staff, for they mounted their horses and rode rapidly away towards the firing line. Then a little later no doubt at all remained in my mind that affairs were serious, possibly critical, and wounded men began to be carried in. One poor fellow, splashed with blood, was brought in on a donkey, supported on either side by limping comrades, also slightly hurt; all of them, as I learned later, by the terrible shrapnel.

I interviewed Salim, who was already busy packing the gear as quickly as possible. Stray shrapnel sent showers of bullets amongst us, and so the battle for Ain Zara began.

My anxiety to get information that might be useful now took up all my attention and energy, so I made off towards the front, the noise and confusion increasing as I rode nearer, past groups of fugitives carrying all sorts of household implements, and many of the artillery horses pounding along without the guns.

When I came to the bazaar I found Arab merchants hurriedly trying to conclude bargains, even with the shells flying around them, so strong was the ruling passion which always seems to dominate them.

Sheik Suleiman Barouni urged these loiterers both

with whip and voice, to cease their business and clear off, but none of them seemed to realise their danger.

I rode on to the highest ridge, which commanded the entire position, and from here I could watch the progress of affairs.

The Italian attack developed, as they came on in crescent formation, an enveloping movement. The bulk of the army concentrated against our left, and to withstand this tremendous assault we only had eight old patterned Krupp guns, which took half an hour to load, a few hundred Arabs and twenty Turkish infantry.

Nazim Bey and some thirty-five cavalry were a few miles away farther to the left, towards Gargerish, the position of battery A, which consisted of three guns, commanded by Achmet Effendi, a sixty-year-old captain.

The fourth gun was placed on a hillock called Guzenata, directly opposite Sidi Misri, whereon stood an Italian battery. The remaining battery B was somewhat nearer to Ain Zara, but these guns could not reach the Italians, although they vomited smoke and looked terrible enough.

Our skeleton army held their own until the afternoon, when the Italians, who had been advancing in regulation form, stopping to entrench every hundred yards or so, arrived within a thousand metres of battery A, which had run out of ammunition.

All this time the enemy's guns kept up a ceaseless fire from ships, forts, batteries, and machine guns,

but by some miracle our forces were not decimated. Aeroplanes hovered over us, signalling information of our exact positions to the various batteries and forts, but the Turks stuck to their guns in spite of it all.

On the right between us and Suk el Juma a conspicuous conical sand mountain, which had sheltered the cavalry camp, came in for more than its share of the shell, and I do not think that even a fly could have remained alive upon it.

The Arabs, some seven hundred of them, stationed amongst the gardens of Suk el Juma, gave a good account of themselves, fighting with their accustomed ferocity; they flung back the Italian left, and could reinforcements in sufficient numbers have come up at that critical moment, the battle of Ain Zara would have had a different termination.

I heard afterwards that a couple of thousand of these hardy warriors would have well turned the scale, and would have completely cut off the retreat of the Italians back to Tripoli.

The order to retire to Bu Gashir, which came about three o'clock in the afternoon, was evidently perfectly incomprehensible to them, after their magnificent behaviour; but from lack of intelligence nothing was known of what was going on in the south and the west. Upon returning to the camp I found that Salim had already packed, and two camels were staggering under a load quite enough for three. We left nothing behind, but it speaks volumes for the kindness and hospitality of the Turks, that they

should leave their gear and carry that of the strangers. Fugitives began to crowd into the place, but there was no confusion, as we all made off for Fonduk Bu Gashir across the trackless desert.

The road of course was swept by the Italian guns; indeed, more than once I heard the whistle of shrapnel bullets closer to my head than I liked, and added to this an aeroplane swooped here and there across our line of retreat, urging the stragglers and incidentally stimulating my own energy. One rather amusing incident occurred near to me during this retreat. As the aeroplane swept over us, that part of the line immediately beneath it swayed and scattered, crouching like a flock of partridges, waiting the dreaded bomb. A Turkish captain took a rifle out of the hands of one of the soldiers to have a shot at it. The gun did not go off, for it seems that in the excitement of the moment he forgot to alter the safety spring, and the aeroplane quickly buzzed away out of range. On recovering the rifle, whilst the soldier was examining the spring it went off unexpectedly, and the charge only just missed the captain!

It is astonishing how vast an area the desert seems to be. There must have been some thousands of fugitives there, and yet I lost myself for fully half an hour, and thought that I might have to spend the night, and perhaps meet a worse fate, in this wilderness. The soft yielding sand muffles the footfall and deadens any sound of marching.

Fortunately this part of the desert was lumpy,

the drifting sand being piled up in mounds, so that in mounting one of them in order to try and find my bearings, I espied the staff only about a thousand yards away, following the direction of the setting sun. I promptly walked south to cut their trail, and falling in with the ragged irregular procession I continued my march. The way was perfectly defined now, pathetically marked by finger-posts of all manner of debris—saddles, trail ropes, and all sorts of small things. Arab women and children, many of them almost babies, footed it right merrily. One boy, who could not have been more than seven years old, carried a tent pole as large again as himself. War-weary soldiers staggered along, many suffering from wounds which would certainly have laid most men in hospital. But these decorations are looked upon in much the same way as the ordinary Tommy Atkins regards his war medals.

I found my travelling companions very sociable As night fell, the march took on a fresh charm from the mystery of the moonlight in the desert. The temperature lowered, and I felt thankful for my overcoat. A long eight hours' march brought us to the fonduk, and here I found Neshet and his staff sitting cross-legged on the broken dirty floor of the only habitable room in the place, in which useless lumber filled up the corners. By the light of a single candle, which was stuck in a bottle, and with the help of a map spread out upon the floor, the general and his staff talked as calmly as if the defeat was of no consequence.

Fethi Bey in his musical voice murmured something about another plan which would make everything right. Inshallah! no one seemed the least bit concerned. Tahar Bey and a few tired cavalry on jaded horses rode back to reconnoitre. I fully expected to see something of the seventy thousand cavalry long ere this, but such was the extraordinary immobility of the enemy that this one perfect opportunity of settling the fate of Tripolitaine was lost. No wonder everyone of my companions took fresh heart, feeling that although the battle was lost they were still conquerors.

My baggage arrived with Salim, who scolded me for getting lost and making him cry. He soon got some hot tea, which I directed to be taken to headquarters, following myself later. Someone, I think it was Fethi, produced a huge box of sardines and some bread, so that with the tea and cigarettes we made a very excellent meal. I think that I felt more sorrow than they. There was something so pathetic in their wild wistful eyes, so heroic under such a crushing reverse. Breakfast, I think that we might call it, was soon despatched. Then Neshet's energy returned, and I left him scribbling orders and commands to waiting orderlies. We could hear in the distance the boom of the artillery, for the Italians pounded away at the sand for a long time after every human being had vanished. And so cheered and inspired by the war chants of the Arabs the retreat continued, our goal, Azizia, being still many miles away.

The stragglers by this time had come up, and we kept a fairly good line of march. Here and there we passed parties of Arabs or soldiers making tea, and laughingly relating their adventures and firing rifles aimlessly to give point to their tales. Other Arab bands replied to this spontaneous musketry by blazing away in return. The whole situation was comical, if it had not been so very serious. Imagine a beaten army, and the enemy supposed to be following us up, firing, drumming, and making noise enough to be heard three miles away! It looked as if our experiences would be followed by a night attack! In fact, a friend of mine came riding up and declared that the Italians were on our flank, and that shells were bursting as near as half a mile away. The only explanation I could offer was that the warriors were showing off their old-fashioned blunderbusses, for many carried this ancient weapon besides a Mauser; indeed, I have seen these doughty men-at-arms carrying as many as four rifles, and almost his own weight in cartridges, and yet marching four miles an hour, laughing and chatting all the time.

There was a sadder side to this picture though. The wounded were having a very bad time. One poor chap, mortally hurt, was stuffed into an old packing-case with his legs bent double, his head lolling over the edge, and all the time uttering faint prayers to Allah, between the jerks of a very rough baggage camel upon which he and a companion on the other side were being borne. He never reached

Azizia, poor fellow; there were a few stifled sobs, the lolling head stiffened, and we left him in a few inches of sand by the wayside. At last we reached Azizia, where a kindly doctor, Orhan Bey, placed his bed at my disposal, and in a state of absolute exhaustion I slept the clock round.

The red hill of Azizia rises like an elongated cone to the height of 150 feet direct from the plain. The top is crowned with a marabout, the tomb of Sidi Ramadan, for it is always the custom of the Arabs to bury saints upon the top of the highest hill in the neighbourhood.

At the foot there is generally a straggling village and a terrace of burrows or underground houses. The saint soon has plenty of company—for these spots are considered to be holy, and therefore sanctified as a burial-ground. This particular cemetery drains into the village well, and is spreading death and disease throughout the district. These burial-grounds soon get uncomfortably crowded, the shallow graves lie close to each other like furrows, and votive offerings of old rags, stones, and other tokens of enduring love and affection ornament the graves.

A line of dusky mountains runs south and west, and their mysterious hollows I yearned to explore. The original plan was to retire to Gherien, a fortress high up among the summits, an impregnable fastness, approached only by a stupendous pass. Hakki Bey brought in the news, incredible as it seems, that the Italians actually retired to their trenches, leaving all

manner of military equipment behind them, and that our soldiers had carried away as much as they possibly could.

Neshet and his staff settled themselves temporarily in the house of Kasr or Kaimakhan, sending the wounded along. I followed them at five o'clock in the afternoon, and at the first stage of the journey a halt was made at an underground outpost, quite an ideal place for shelter from aerial bombs. Here we met several officers, and we had a good square meal in comfort.

At midnight we started, and reached the curious underground fonduk in the early hours of the morning. Here we were regaled with *legbe*, or palm wine, and some hot tea.

An Arab, who was locally reputed to be more than one hundred years old, kept the fonduk. I might perhaps explain to the reader here that a fonduk is the only equivalent to an inn, but there is none of the welcome hospitality which we associate here with such a resting-place. Fonduks are really lodging-houses, and like them of course they vary in size, some having only a few rooms, whilst others have a great number. Sometimes they are underground, sometimes above ground, and built with dried mud walls.

In any case, it is arranged that there is a compound in the centre for the animals, and the accommodation rooms extend from this on all sides. The rooms are quite bare, and all that the traveller

considers to be necessary he brings with him, food and all. The only service obtainable is that of the one man who guards the place and its visitors from intrusion or theft, like the night porter at an hotel in this country.

In this particular fonduk there are two chambers fashioned out of the rock, and whoever designed the rooms must have had some architectural knowledge. Three Roman arches canopy the raised platforms on three sides of the chamber; the workmanship is excellent, and the design true. For a few *doxans* (one *doxan* is about twopence halfpenny) you can have the use of one of these lodgings, fleas and all, for the night, and, moreover, be allowed to pack in as many guests as you like. The cost of the accommodation discourages criticism of it. The cooking is done on the floor, the fire filling the place with a strong pungent smoke, disagreeable to the eyes and throat. Arabs, of course, are quite indifferent to such trifles as these.

CHAPTER VIII

I CONTINUE MY JOURNEY

THE night travelling is pleasant, but the heat of the day is exhausting. I was surprised to find though that, in spite of the heat, and in spite of the fact that I smoked my pipe incessantly all day long, I scarcely ever suffered from thirst, often travelling in the hot sun for a whole day without a drink of any description. I attribute this largely to an excellent habit which I acquired from the Arabs, and that was to clean my teeth many times a day, and always after any meal, however light. I very strongly recommend this practice. When I started I had a precious bottle of Odol and a tooth-brush, but like all good things the Odol came to an end, and the tooth-brush became worn out, so that after then I did what my companions did, used my fingers to apply the water.

Soon after we left the fonduk our road zig-zagged at an almost perpendicular angle up the mountain side.

Some slight attempts had been made in the past to improve it, but what struck me was the admirable position it would have been for a defending army. A dozen good shots, with plenty of ammunition, could

have kept a thousand men at bay quite easily. It reminded me of the famous pass of Killiecrankie, only it was wilder, grander, and much longer. I felt my spirits rise and my pulse throb with the delightful change of the air and the temperature, for we had reached an altitude of more than a thousand feet above the plain below. A curious round tower, built on the same lines as those famous towers in Ireland, stands like a sentinel at the entrance to the pass. It could hardly have been intended for a watch tower, and for what purpose it had been erected was a matter of conjecture. From the edge of the vertical cliffs the vast plain lay open. The smallest track was perfectly distinct. The unmade road winds its way through hills rich in various produce—corn, vines, and olive groves. At intervals one comes across Roman wells, and small towns of the troglodytes, the dwellers in subterranean houses. One first gets a passing glance of a steep stairway leading down to the compound, fifty feet below, and from which rude doorways open into galleries; all is black darkness, but for the occasional glimmer of an oil lamp in the living rooms of these strange people.

The ancient crater of an extinct volcano almost overhung us from the summit, from which the general plan of this town looks singularly like a map of the moon. We journeyed on, through olive groves, gardens and cornlands, to the second pass, steeper, but not quite so long as the first. The fragrance

of wild thyme pervaded the air, and heathy vegetation covered the slopes. Here and there a wild date palm marks a point in the landscape. The town of Gherien is almost half subterranean. The road ran through gardens of fig and other fruit trees, with a ruined house or two here and there, and we passed into the market square.

Here bazaar was going on and brisk trade doing in vegetables and fruits. We found some cigarettes and native tobacco, and incidentally a variety of Manchester goods. Occasionally some good carpets find their way into the *suks*, but their values are too well known to give much chance to the bargain hunter. Beggars abounded in profusion; they were most persistent, and one old chap, more determined than his companions, absolutely refused to leave us until he was backsheeshed. He was a marabout, or pilgrim to the saints' tombs, and it is imperative to give these itinerant saints something, if only the smallest coin you happen to have about you. About a kilometre farther on the road suddenly ended at the gates of a picturesque medieval Arab castle, now used as a barracks, and here we stayed. Its ancient walls are buttressed by precipices. From the giddy height of its now crumbling embrasures the view is absolutely magnificent. The foot-hills and spurs of the mountain run out into the desert. Far away in the distance is the shimmering hazy quivering line of blue sea limiting the plain, whilst very faintly can be distinguished the red hill at

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THE PASS UP THE MOUNTAIN TO GHERIEN

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Azizia, with the white tomb of the marabout upon its summit, blazing in the sunlight like a flash point over the plain. The caravan routes, like gossamer threads, cross one another again and again, and from the distance look like a woven pattern.

On the landward side there is a deep ravine following the slopes of the mountain on which the castle stands. A limpid brook babbles as it runs, watering the jungle of fruit trees that fill this gorge. Everything flourishes in great abundance in this happy tropical valley, open only to the sky. Terraced gardens hang on the mountain side, towards which I would see trains of patient donkeys struggling with their loads of fresh earth. Tiny rills everywhere supply these hanging gardens with the necessary water.

Beautiful as this picture is when veiled in the morning mist, it is doubly so in the glory of the setting sun; the whole seems bathed in an amber light, transfiguring the landscape into almost a dream-picture of rose gold and *eau de nielle.* At last night spread its dark pall with almost startling suddenness. The silver stars shone with metallic brilliancy contrasted with the dull flickering gold of the camp fires, and all the world seemed to be at rest.

Like all Arab buildings the walls of this old castle were in the last stages of dilapidation; the ironwork encrusted with rust, windows and doors hanging by a single hinge, or lying neglected upon

the ground. The floor of the courtyard consisted of the natural rough surface of the mountain-top, with the more uneven places filled in here and there with rough boulders embedded in cement. Over this uneven floor the pack animals carefully picked their way, until the whole yard was crammed full of slobbering, uneasy camels vainly trying to find sufficient space in which to lie down. To add to the general confusion a number of stallions began fighting, and their drivers shrieking at them to desist. In spite of all this the commissariat party went on methodically weighing sacks of flour and serving out stores in calm indifference to the persistent hubbub. In moving about at night in such a compound the unwary runs a good chance of a broken leg, or worse, if not careful in traversing the worn and broken surface. I can compare it to nothing but a slippery, rocky beach.

One-storied chambers of various sizes—some dungeon-like, others of noble dimensions—line the old walls, all of them in a picturesque state of dilapidation, for the Arab believes in never repairing anything. Seated upon the rugged platform of the ancient well I noticed an old Arab feeding four camels, and all that he had to give the tired animals was a few pounds of rough grass.

An uneven irregular stone staircase, with a broken balustrade, led to the upper chambers, which were originally, I was told, the apartments of the ladies of the harem. The windows, close battened, the tunnel-

like passages, the primitive cooking places, all left just as they stood when the Arab potentate ruled over that part of the country; the stone divans beneath the windows were just the same. Now these quiet abodes of rest and pleasure resound to the tramp of armed men and the clattering of accoutrements. The old chimneys and the old-fashioned fireplaces do their duty just as well as ever they did of old. I involuntarily thought of the long years ago when the merry chatter and laughter of beautiful women echoed along these now deserted walls. The thick hanging curtains, embroidered cushions, the priceless carpets, have all gone long since, and where once the lute hung are now suspended revolvers, swords, and cartridge belts.

The building next in importance to the one which I have just endeavoured to describe was quite a modern affair; it had been a school, but is now given over to the use of the Red Crescent. Frock-coated, white-collared gentlemen wearing the fez, requested the pleasure of my company to a welcome dinner. I very gladly availed myself of the invitation, and sat down once more to a meal worthy of a Parisian restaurant. The wines of the best, a table of four courses, and dessert!

I found it to be the occasion of the return of Riphat and Jussef Beys from a visit to Paris. They had come to take charge of the hospital, and they pointed out to me with pardonable pride the well-ordered wards, the cases of drugs, the surgical

instruments, and so on. In fact there was nothing to find any fault with at all. Everything was as comfortable and up to date as in a modern hospital in London. I recognised some of my old friends of Ain Zara now recovering rapidly, and anxious to return to fight once more for the Sultan. Of those who benefited the most were many Italian prisoners —"the Signors," as they were respectfully and kindly spoken of. I saw five of them playing quoits in the compound, and thoroughly enjoying themselves. The ordinary soldier garb had long since been worn out, and with amusing incongruity they were now dressed in Turkish uniforms. A man named Garganti, one of their number, had been badly shot through the elbow, but thanks to the skill of Riphat his arm was saved, but never to be of much use again. He talked to me of his far-off home, and how he longed to get there, and how at the end of the war he was to retire with a pension of 1000 lire a month.

A small house was placed at their disposal, and also a cooking shed. I could not help thinking that they were probably far more comfortable there than many of their comrades in Tripoli; and yet when the distant thunder of the big guns faintly echoed through the valley maybe they hoped the time of their deliverance was at hand. But these were not the only captives, four Ascharis (native troops) shared the house with Garganti and his fellow-prisoners.

Major Paget and I tried to soften their captivity

with presents of cigarettes and tobacco, to which their good-natured gaolers never objected at all.

On the last occasion of my visit I noticed that the Aschari seemed buoyed up and more than usually cheerful, and that they were keeping themselves apart from the others. The next morning we heard that three Italian prisoners had managed to escape, but later in the afternoon the news came in that they had been recaptured. Quite a crowd assembled to see these wretched chaps return. It seems that they had marched for five hours and managed to reach the spring at the foot of the mountains. Here they were detected and pounced upon by the watchful gendarmes, who roped them together and marched them back. I never saw such a hungry, tired, hopeless looking lot of men when they arrived after their ten hours of freedom, without food or water. They were well treated by the Turks and not punished, excepting that all privileges were stopped. Poor Garganti and his fellow-soldiers were all confined in the old Arab castle when I last saw them just before I left. Before I started I made several pleasant excursions with my medical friends, and I was surprised at the richness and beauty of the country all around. But we were not without occasional reminders that the business of war was proceeding apace, for reinforcements were continually coming in from the far distant Fezzan and the further oasis of the Sahara.

CHAPTER IX

BACK TO AZIZIA

I WAS sorry to leave Gherien; the contemplation of a return to the dust and dirt of Azizia was not a very pleasing prospect. At the head of the pass I stood and contrasted the dusty plain below, quivering in the noontide heat, with the delightful comfort of the cool mountain breezes which I was leaving behind me. I travelled all the day, and reached my destination at five o'clock in the afternoon. I was pleased to find some new arrivals; a Mr. Bennett, ex-M.P., and Captain Bettleheim, of South African fame, a trim, soldierly-looking man, with a keen, alert look. I almost felt ashamed of the comparison between my travel-worn suit and his elegant Bond Street attire. Mr. G. F. Abbott was there too; he is the great authority upon all things Eastern, and had come to write the history of this war.

I felt gratified by the warmth of the welcome that I received from Neshet Bey and his staff. I noticed, however, with much regret, that there were more hospital tents now, and they seemed to be crowded. Salim pitched my tent on the hill, upon the track leading to the cemetery, so that at least

THE GUARD

AZIZIA

EKREM BEY AND HIS TUARAGS

HOW THE AUTHOR SOMETIMES TRAVELLED

half a dozen times a day I was compelled to listen to the weird chant of the mourners and bearers as they were carrying one or another of the holy warriors to his last long rest. On Christmas Eve I fell ill with a complaint that was soon pronounced to be dysentery, and I spent the most memorable and most miserable Christmas-time that I have ever known. The death chants now seemed to have some real meaning for me, and possibly with the best intentions in the world an aged camel deposited himself immediately at the back of my tent and groaned his last.

This of itself was enough to poison anybody, and yet the carcass was left there to decompose and breed all manner of flies and pestilence simply because it was nobody's business to bury it. Medicine and medical attendance were almost entirely lacking here, so that feeling more dead than alive I made up my mind to cure myself by the most drastic method that I could devise, but it had the desired effect at all events. "Salim," I said, "to-morrow get five camels ready and I shall ride to Tunis, because I feel that the air of the desert is the only thing that will cure me."

I was looked upon as being mad, and the doctors tried to dissuade me from going, but indeed I felt so ill, and so absolutely indifferent as to the consequences that I was determined to risk it. The camels arrived early in the morning, but through the usual dilatory tactics on the part of the drivers I did not

get off until late in the afternoon, and my friend Bennett accompanied me. At the outset my camel man lost the way, and consequently we did not reach the fonduk until midnight. The valiant Salim, who had already reproved me as a naughty child, seized a rifle and threatened to shoot the guide for losing his master, as he called me, and was only disarmed by Bennett after the greatest difficulty. However, trips to Tunis are not particularly interesting to relate, and suffice it to say that I eventually covered the thousand mile journey, feeling better every day during my kill or cure treatment; had a pleasant month with my friends in that delightful city, and then returned to my duties, feeling a different man altogether.

Full of gratitude to my charming hosts, I brought ten camels loaded with luxuries and delicacies of various kinds for the benefit of those whom I had left behind me at headquarters. I was received by Neshet himself and Fethi Bey, who personally saw to the pitching of my tent. I was delighted to be with them again, but it was painful to me to notice the change in my hitherto irrepressibly lively companions. The utter boredom from inaction had entirely prostrated them; even with such soldiers as these Turks, who do and suffer without complaint, one saw in the worn and wistful faces the pathetic result of the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.

We unloaded the ten camels of their, to us, welcome burdens in the compound inside the Kazan or

barracks, a compound of dirt, industry, and animals. The camel is an extraordinary animal, probably little known to my readers beyond the happy memories of rides years ago in the beautiful gardens of the Zoological Society. I so well remember that as we were hard at this job of relieving the animals of their burdens they were all the time groaning, squeaking, and gurgling. This so-called beast of burden seems to have every note of complaint in his vocabulary, and the predominant note seems to be ever one of lamentation. He grumbles when lying down, protests whilst he is being loaded, and when he is at last relieved of his burden, you may not stand in front of him, neither may you pass him by, without the calling forth of the most venomous animal curses ever given vent to.

I have often tried to analyse his vocal repertoire in the hope of being able to discover his meaning either in love or war; but it is, under any condition, ever the same bitter cry.

But with all his defects of temper he is by far the most useful of all beasts of burden as a transport animal. The most patient, docile, untiring creature, he covers hundreds of leagues of desert without any proper food or water, plodding steadily on at the average rate of 2½ kilometres an hour, like as one born to the track.

He follows in the immediate steps of his leader, and no caravan is complete without the frivolous little baby camels, pretty little things in coats of the

softest mouse-grey, always carefully clipped with the exception of a pompon-like tuft on the top of his baby hump, which gives him a "nutty" rakish look. At a very early age he begets wisdom, and takes his station in the line. His solemn, soft, and wondering eyes, seemingly gazing at nothing at all as he strides along, are wonderfully pretty; and like the patient ass he seldom is bridled, but directed by voice and stick, and indeed without him the sands of Tripoli would never be crossed.

The principal side of the Kazan faces the bazaar, and irregular terraces of buildings occupy two others. The fourth side, facing the headquarters, is a fair-sized building that had been the schoolhouse, and was now a hospital. I found a great stir and hum of life. There were sellers, merchants from all parts, exposing their wares on the ground. Dusty meat, fish, sugar, vegetables, and tea. There were dry goods and knick-knacks selling freely in the ragged booths, fowls, and goat flesh, the chief article of diet, and pepper seemed to be the most popular condiment. Added to this eager hum of business were the various noises of quarrelling and bargaining, of camels roaring and stallions squealing, a confusion almost paralysing to the Western ear.

Two new hospital marquees were fixed up, capable of accommodating a hundred patients, and they filled up nearly all of the available space in this canvas town, which had been devoted to the nursing of the sick and wounded. I visited these hospitals, as I

knew that my friend Alan Ostler was being treated there for typhus fever. It was little wonder that he contracted the disease, but it was amazing that he ever recovered from it. I say this because the sanitary arrangements were too awful to write about.

It was not the fault of the local faculty, but rather that of the careless administration and defective organisation of the authorities at Constantinople. In the Kazan itself the rooms were crowded with sick officers. Jahar Bey, Abdul Kadir, Fethi, and Djavid weltered and stewed in an airless temperature of 120°, the only window being hermetically sealed and the door closed. Nearly all the doctors were ill with various complaints, and were confined in another dormitory. The only live man about was the commandant, for he still kept at his strenuous duties, although far from being well. The telegraphists too stuck to it bravely. The dinners had improved considerably, and we sat down to meals no longer squatting or eating with our fingers out of one common dish, for plate, glass, and clean linen gave an air of comfort and refinement. All the time that we were dining a pair of swallows twittered above the table. They were nesting in one of the beams overhead, and as they volplaned in and around us they were wittily compared to the Italian aeroplanes that had worried us to a far greater extent.

These staff dinners are serious affairs. No one speaks at all, but stolidly fills up; and no one waits for the ladies to leave the festive board, each person

going outside when he has finished his meal to perform his ablutions. Coffee is generally partaken of in the commandant's room, where business goes on often until the early hours of the morning.

Hard work benefits the Turk as it does everyone else. The General had thoroughly got the grip of affairs, and work went on almost automatically. The one predominant desire was to come to handgrips with the foe and settle the question of Tripolitan once and for all.

Neshet talked of retiring to Gherien, where his guns commanded the formidable passes, as a move of this kind he thought might draw the Italians from the shelter of their positions and give his warriors a chance of getting on the flanks and rear of the enemy, but to this the Arab Sheiks always objected.

Their ideas of strategy being very limited, were confined to a rush and an annihilation of the enemy, for anything like a movement to the rear would be entirely misinterpreted or be construed as flying from so contemptible a foe. The Arab contingent were determined that they would either melt away, or throw themselves against the fortified positions of the enemy and die gloriously. This code of chivalry is carried to such an extent with these extraordinary people that not the slightest attempt is made to construct bomb-proof protection against aerial bombs.

"We have to be most cautious," said Izak Bey to me one day, "against doing anything that looks like showing the white feather. We know that we ought

to take many precautions which we omit to take, but it would be a mistake, for these Arabs would call us cowards, and no one can imagine what would happen."

Later on I saw how true was his estimate of the Arab character, as I saw how amazingly the army grew. From the distant Sahara and beyond, from the Barbary, Egypt, the Soudan, even Lake Tchad, supplied its contingents. Fuzzan sent the prime of its manhood, of the finest fighting force in the wide world.

Amazons accompanied them too in great numbers. There is a story told of a league composed entirely of women, in all about forty of them, banded together in spite of all objections, who vowed to take the sword and gun, and help their men-folk to drive the infidel out of the country. Let me picture one, Selima, as I remember her, a stocky pock-marked damsel, not beautiful, but possessing a perfect manner and the sweetest of voices. Squatting at the entrance to my tent, she had just arrived from the trenches, armed with Italian rifle and bandolier, a scimitar, and a long lance, once the arm of some unfortunate Italian picket whom she had surprised. She sat there talking of battle and fighting as if she were reading me out some choice menu. The fires of enthusiasm gleamed in her dark eyes as she told of how she had been shooting at the enemy for two or three months. The rifle that she held, as the lance, represented the spoils of war. A truly Spartan mother she will

make, for as yet no man may claim her as a wife until he does his devoir in strict accordance with her lofty ideals; a competition undertaken by many a desert warrior, for she was considered a most desirable prize in the matrimonial market. I think that I can see her now, sitting quietly in the blazing sun, drinking her coffee, and confidently predicting a speedy entrance into Tripoli, in her dreamy musical voice. Shortly after I heard she was harem; she had become the bride of a young Sheik, who showed nine "decorations" to his credit.

All our reinforcements came by the road from Gherien. One morning the news came that ten or twenty thousand men were coming in that night. Just about sunset well-disposed bodies of men, consisting of about one thousand in all, and led by their war Sheiks, fine bold horsemen, sitting their prancing stallions with wonderful ease and grace, started off, longing for a fight.

The hauteur and pride of these Sheiks adds somewhat to their natural dignity. I noticed that they scarcely deigned a glance to the humble toilers who salaamed humbly from the roadside as they passed. The minstrels marched ahead, beating their war drums, and chanting their battle songs in high staccato voices. The air vibrated and throbbed to the deep-noted chorus of the warriors who followed. It was of *Oulad'bu zin*, which means, "Sons of mighty fathers." The martial scene was thrilling in the extreme, and the excitement contagious as they came

along, and the very earth seemed to tremble beneath their tramp. Sheik Barouni, with his bodyguard and his escort of zaptirs, clad in blue with scarlet facings, added a splash of colour to the otherwise monotonous tone of the dirty *hrams*. Last of all came the baggage camels, loaded with a very small supply of flour, carrying principally fagots of wood that had been picked up *en route*. The leading warriors were all more or less well armed with Turkish rifles, ancient flint muskets, with barrels five feet long, old blunderbuss pistols, without locks. Spear-sticks even made up the equipment of the rear ranks of the regiment.

In one respect they were equal, and that was in their staying powers and capability for standing any amount of hardship and fatigue. All of them, too, filled with the same burning enthusiasm for God, the Sultan, and the sacred cause. They reminded me on more than one occasion of the old Covenanters. One could scarcely help sympathising with their cause, which, according to all national rights, is just. Should the same circumstances ever arise in our own country, one would wish to see the same devoted patriotism.

Each and every nomad looked forward with joy to the prospect of arming himself at the expense of the invader. Such times have never been known in Tripoli; hundreds of thousands of good golden pounds were tied up in the *hrams* of these doughty warriors. They had received regular pay, plenty of food, and above all, the chances of booty and horses galore.

The camel men also shared in the general prosperity. There had never been more caravans on the move, and five shillings a day is the Government rate of pay.

I selected my camping place about a thousand yards out on the plain, where the ozone-laden west wind blew straight in from the desert, so pure and sweet, a tonic like the finest champagne, and I appreciated it all the more after the foul breath of the Kazan. My neighbour was Nazmi Bey, who was commanding a small detachment of cavalry. He was most generous in helping me to set up the tents.

The rains brought to light a beautiful collection of flowers; from the tall asphodel, with its cluster of star-like flowers, to the lowly marguerite of various shades. A miniature blue iris studded the little prairie, and my horses greatly appreciated the juicy grass. For once even the camels ceased their eternal complaint, for they were stuffed almost to bursting, and lay basking in the brilliant sunshine.

CHAPTER X

CAMP LIFE

My camp gradually became a sort of rendezvous nearly every evening. The charm of rest, rest for the mind as well as for the body, was delightful. No disturbing sounds, but the soothing soft rustle of the herbage when swept by light zephyrs. The fragrant coffee and cigarettes, and the low musical language of the East, produces an almost dreamlike sensation. Some of my visitors squatted cross-legged upon my brilliant carpets, others patronised my lounge chair. Neshet and Fethi often came with some Arab notables to pay me a visit. The talk turned naturally upon the immediate condition of affairs, and of the future. I heard high hopes discussed, but ever the same fear that the sly diplomacy of Europe may yet wrench the hard-won independence from these desert men.

"Yes," said Feshet Bey, the Arab deputy for Zarwia, "the European diplomats are very clever; we may well dread the result. But," he said more fiercely, "whether Turkey gives up the fight or is forced into making peace does not matter to us at all. We are the native sons of the soil, and we shall fight as long as there is one man left to hold a

rifle, and then pass on the settlement of the quarrel to our sons. We don't want Italy to have anything to do with our Government. Had it been England—yes, that would have been different. If we must have a foreign occupation let it be British, because we know the benefits that have resulted from British rule in Egypt. But these Italians will only exploit us for selfish reasons, and give us no chance. We might be bribed with positions of influence and trust for a season, but all the time the Italians would be scheming as to how to supplant us and put their own men in power in our places. What about disarming, too? Of course, we should never be trusted again with rifles, even to defend our own homes. How are we to behave? What are we to think of the power of Italy after such a *debâcle* as we have actually witnessed? No, we quite understand the policy of Europe; now perhaps too late we know; or, like Europe's diplomats, we must frame a policy on probabilities, listen to no more honeyed promises or paper treaties, but take our stand on principles alone.

"The object-lesson which every child can see is that the Governments of the world to-day admit of no right, save one, and that is force. God has given us a country, a nationality; but unless that land is sown with guns, then the first European who is strong enough to do so can claim and take it!" Herein lies the puzzle to the Asiatic world.

The setting sun warned my visitors of the

difficulty of threading their way home through patches of thorny scrub. At night we had to carry lanterns, moving in silence like so many will-o'-the-wisps. Day after day of this idle life made time hang wearily. I tired of the eternal splendour of the day, and towards noon the heat carries a sting with it. The flowers wither and welt in it. Nazmi and I arranged a sort of mess together; on alternate days we had meals in each other's tent. Nazmi is one of the smartest officers in service —tall, well built, his fine athletic figure fills out his well-built khaki. No Sackville Street man could tailor him better. There is something besides smartness, though, for he has a soldier's heart, daring everything, fearing nothing—a *beau sabreur*. His men are well set up too, not slovenly clad, for even the rags that some of the poor fellows have from necessity to wear are smartly put on. Like all Turks, he is a fatalist. He knows his job, and he wants a chance of surprising the enemy, but with the insignificant body of cavalry he can do little or nothing. About this time I heard that the enemy had shown some activity in the neighbourhood of Zanzur and Sanii beni Adem.[1] And so with the permission of the commandant I removed my establishment to the last-named place. The camels started in good time, with orders to pitch the tent and have everything ready. I rode on after lunch; the distance is only

[1] Sanii beni Adem means the garden of Adam, but there seems no reason for such a flowery name, unless two clumps of attenuated palm trees shading a draw-well justify it.

twenty miles, and I calculated upon reaching it sometime about sundown.

The camp itself lies about a mile to the east, where I could see the white tents in the warm evening glow. Horses were coming and going to the water; camp followers in their picturesque rags and beggars lined the road; squads of soldiers added a touch of military life to the scene. I was received by Muheddin Bey, a bimbashi or major in the Turkish cavalry. He commands the western division, is second to Neshet, and should anything untoward happen to the general he would take command. I entered his big bell-shaped tent, and found it quite well furnished, and certainly up to date in one respect, for upon an old packing-case, which served as an office table, stood a telephone! "Our new scout," he said, touching it gently. "The outposts at Zanzur are linked up, and any serious move on the part of the enemy is reported at once." Not a word of this new feature had leaked out, it was hoped, to the Italians, for the keeping of this secret meant, perchance, the defeat of the enemy. Hitherto when the Italians were "out," at least three good hours elapsed ere the news came in. We hoped that the enemy might not be in a position to take this new factor into consideration in making their plans and so give us time to surprise them. But somehow the Italians learnt of it, and I afterwards discovered that the camp swarmed with their spies, who kept our foes in Tripoli posted up in this and in nearly everything else that happened. A camp bed

MUHEDDIN ADDRESSING HIS MEN BEFORE THE FIGHT, ZANZUR

THE RALLY

A GROUP OF ARAB CHIEFTAINS, ZANZUR

CONVOY UNLOADING INSIDE CASTLE GHERIEN

and one or two shaky chairs completed the furniture, whilst carpets were laid upon the ground for Arab visitors. Muheddin is a young Turk, in both senses of the word, and a good soldier. In front of his tent stood a pavilion: four strong uprights of date-wood supported a canopy of waterproof sheeting, once the property of some Italian officer. Beneath this on torrid days the commandant conducted his business. His camp is carefully planned and well laid out. There were many conveniences there which were lacking in others; the long lines of picketed horses were regularly attended to, horse-guards looking well after their wants.

The organisation even extended to myself. Old Salim, my Arab henchman, is a great believer in the old method of "go as you please," but here for the first time a controlling influence prevented his pitching my tent where he liked, but appointed a place, and also the spot for my horses and camels. The camp was on a vast treeless plain, bountifully supplied with a variety of flowers and grasses. The air is bracing and invigorating, and it is altogether a desirable dwelling-place. Around us, in the distance, like a great ring, were set the picturesque black tents of the Arab encampments.

To me there is always something very attractive in the lively sounds of military life: the call of the bugle and the clatter of arms. I used to rise early, watch the drilling, and take walks in the district before the heat of the day made walking uncomfortable.

CONVOY UNLOADING INSIDE CASTLE GATES

A GROUP OF ARAB CHIEFTAINS, ZANZUR

Here the romance of the past coloured the present. Like the legions of ancient Rome, we sat in tents. Like them, we ate and drank beside the self-same wells. Similar meals, similar methods of cooking; even our amphoræ, or water jars, have not changed in shape, colour, or design through all the centuries. The horses, too, are the same hardy breed as those that fought and kicked each other in the Roman lines. The Arab saddles, with their high pommels, in many cases stirrupless, are built on the lines of the early Roman model. The many-coloured trappings have not been altered; everything, indeed, reminds one of old times. I can see the same soft-eyed maids of Araby moving in and out amongst the horses, picking up the grains of barley that the beasts have dropped. Truly classic they look as they return homewards carrying the sieve hanging behind their heads, giving the impression of a halo in the pictures of saints. The grain is ground by their mothers with the actual stones used a thousand years since.

But to come back to facts. I liked the place well. I love space and air—here untainted as yet by filth and flies. It was a cheery, brisk life. Pickets going to the advance posts regularly night and morning, for we were in touch with many places. The Italian outposts were within shouting distance of our own.

The western division, that district which lies

between the Italian lines and our own, was divided roughly into two parts. The eastern section, under the command of Hamid Bey, whose headquarters are at Bu Gashir, and the western by Muheddin Bey, whose guest I was. Here again I found myself amongst a number of old friends: Mahmoud in command of the cavalry, with Ekrem and Arti, two officers of the Sultan's Household Brigade. The headquarters' camp, with officers' tents and two for hospital, ran east and west. There was also one other belonging to Captain Bettleheim, and this headed a line of tents which ran northward.

Between the horses and ourselves there were set up the marquees and tents for the soldiers. I must not forget to mention some of the German officers who were here to help the Turks: Lieut. Baron Dulwigs, his brother, and Lieut. Rodênski. They lived in a hospital tent which had been placed at their disposal by the Turks. They were attached to the cavalry, and we became the greatest of friends. Their duties were light, principally visiting the advanced posts at Mamura and Fonduk Touar, and riding the line as far as Ain Zara.

On several occasions I rode with them. We could make out the Italian pickets through our glasses, and doubtless we were near enough for them to number our party. It must have puzzled them very much to notice the presence of white men with the Arab troops. We generally started out at sundown, returning early upon the following morning.

These rides I always enjoyed very much indeed. Generally we had coffee at one or another of the outposts, and then had a little sleep in our military greatcoats. The return over the balmy-scented plains was delicious, each blade of grass, crested with dew, sparkled in the rising sun like diamonds. I always brought back with me a bouquet to brighten up my tent. My friends were so thoughtful and attentive that, when for one reason or another I was unable to accompany them, they made it almost a point of duty to gather a nosegay for me as well as reconnoitre the enemy.

Very interesting were the Arab camps, pitched in a vast semicircle at long intervals, to give plenty of breathing space. My neighbours were from Masharata, and all were renowned warriors. Their sobriquet, "Sons of the Sword," was well earned in many a hard-fought field. Captained by one Sheik Mahomet, their charges were irresistible. A stout, jovial old boy was Sheik Mahomet, more like an English county squire in appearance than a holy warrior. With the exception of fighting, there was nothing that he liked better than a long gossip. Every morning, as he passed my tent on his way to that of the commandant, mounted on a donkey, we always exchanged salaams, and often my good friend would stop and join me in a cup of tea, his favourite beverage, and it always awaited him whether he had time to stop or not.

It was difficult to realise that this portly gentleman was such a dashing leader. No man more

active, and none with a greater disdain of danger. These qualities made him one of the most popular of all the fighting sheiks. He always saw the comic side of things, and told many funny stories; but much of their humour was lost upon me, my knowledge of Arabic being so imperfect.

One day we made up a party to visit Zanzur, and like a lot of schoolboys given a day's holiday we started off. Even the horses seemed to enter into our feelings, and prancing, frolicking, and racing we chivied across the desert until we struck the Zanzur track.

In part we ploughed through deep heavy sand-drifts, and then again over lumpy hillocks, now thickly covered with vegetation. An ideal district for defence, every few hundred yards or so there were ridges and hillocks, each in themselves a fortress. Shell fire is practically harmless in such a place, although we were always exposed to the danger of them from aloft.

Italy's aerial fleet were operating in earnest just at this time. Aeroplanes we had always with us, but of the new terror, "the Dirigible," and of its destructive properties, we had heard nothing.

We found that Tahar Bey was in command at Zanzur. This lovely oasis is celebrated for its marvellous fertility, for it produces all kinds of garden stuff, and the water-melons grow here to such an enormous size that I was told that a couple of them will sometimes make a fair camel load.

As in all Arab villages, there was the Kaimakhan's house and several Government buildings, all of them more or less in a state of decay. The place is famous for a special kind of pottery. It seems that every town has its one speciality in one form or another. And although these pots might be made elsewhere, so conservative are the people, that one must come to Zanzur for this particular pot, and the Arabs journey hundreds of miles to get them.

The time of which I write was in the early spring, and I so well remember the delicate shell-tinted blossoms of the apricot trees. We halted in an orchard of them, where the fallen flowers had carpeted the fresh green turf, leaving an impression of beauty upon my mind that I still retain.

Our luncheon consisted of some sweet and sour milk, and after a little rest we started off for the trenches. Such a wild mad gallop it was too, partly because the rush was necessary to cover the danger zone, over which an occasional shrapnel burst from the guns of Gargerish.

When this danger was once passed, the horses were left in a hollow, and we proceeded to crawl carefully up the slopes. The trenches were primitive and insignificant, but were singularly well placed, commanding as they did the plain between them and the fort of Gargerish. We could see the Italian gunners quite plainly as they crowded into the embrasures to look at us. They evidently did not think that we were 'worth wasting a shot at,

but had they known that the commandant and Sheik Barouni with other prominent officers, sheiks, and others were there, they would certainly have treated us to a little shell storm. The fort mounted four guns of heavy calibre, but the broken shells showed that they were old patterned, probably once used by the Turks in Tripoli. The Turks suggested that they were probably afraid to risk their best guns in this important position, as it was too far from Tripoli, and there was a certain amount of chance that the Arabs might take the fort.

The view was charming. The flat plain merging into ridges of undulating sand heaps, over which I had toiled upon my march to Ain Zara, was now fortified. Besides the fort there were brown lines of trenches and earthworks, which looked formidable enough.

One night, shortly after this excursion, Barouni, with some two hundred of his men, made a very daring onslaught, and very nearly succeeded in capturing the place by surprise, being eventually beaten back when within a little more than a hundred yards of the fort.

CHAPTER XI

AIRSHIPS AND AEROPLANES IN WARFARE

WHAT the stupendous and appalling developments may be of the introduction of aerial conflict into warfare yet remains to be seen. It only seems recently that such a possibility was confined to the romantic stories of Jules Verne and other imaginative writers. To-day it is an accomplished fact, and in this war between Turkey and Italy its practical introduction has been one of the most interesting features of the campaign. It staggers the mind to think for one minute what it might lead to with the future advance in the science of aerial navigation. One thing I know that it had done, and that was to transform the serene life at Sanii beni Adem into one of continual apprehension and anxiety. We had been without much excitement, and it seemed difficult sometimes to realise that we were at war.

However, over this placid state of existence a change was impending, and it came when the Italian activities recommenced with the arrival of the dirigibles P. II. and P. III.

A report came in one day to the effect that the enemy were amusing themselves by flying kites. Both the Turks and the Arabs wondered at this,

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BOMB DISCHARGED FROM P.II. BURSTING AS IT
STRIKES THE GROUND

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and ridiculed their apparent childishness, and pronounced them mad as well as cowardly. But some of the officers came to ask me if I could suggest an explanation. It immediately occurred to me that there was method in their so-called madness, and that this kite-flying was a prelude to much more serious business, as indeed it very soon proved to be. One peaceful morning about eight o'clock a strange phenomenon presented itself in the sky. Over Tripoli was hovering what appeared to be an indistinct moon. The sky was heavy, and a purple haze obscured the horizon.

We were not left long in doubt as to what this strange new object was, for gradually it turned and presented the long ovoid body of an airship, a new terror for frightening these unconquerable desert men. I had seen it before manœuvring above the lagoons at Venice earlier in the year. We all watched its motions with intense interest; the Turks showed little concern, and the Arabs seemed to think that the Italians were providing a new target for them to practise at. Rifles were immediately discharged, in their usually excited and erratic manner, although the ship was a good fifteen miles away. This first ascent was evidently only a trial trip, or perhaps the kites had shown that the wind was set in a wrong direction, for she continued to hover over Tripoli. Probably, too, they were testing the engines.

A week elapsed before the "ballon," as they called it, made another ascent, this time accompanied by a

second airship. Together they proceeded slowly and gracefully to Zanzur, manœuvring like a couple of battleships. They hovered over Zanzur, and then circled toward Zarwia, and returned.

That evening the first casualties were reported, and brought in to the camp for treatment. Unfortunately several women and children happened to be the victims, for the bombs had been dropped in the Bazaar, or market-place, killing or severely injuring about six people. One of the wounded was a dear little baby, and the poor mite presented a very dreadful sight. The stomach was ripped open as with a butcher's knife, exposing the lungs and entrails. It seemed from the first that nothing could help the poor child, but Beshir Bey did his very best, and indeed told me he hoped to save its life. But when I went to the hospital tent to make inquiries the next morning, I found the poor little thing dead, and the mother very naturally distracted. Although all is fair in love and war, I do still think that some little discrimination ought to have been observed between the soldiers and the non-combatants. The Arab soldiers were all in camps, well away from the market-place, or in the trenches, and this the airmen could very well have seen. I will do them the justice of trying to believe that they were as unaccustomed to an accurate aim as were their comrades in the forts and on the battleships, and that the difficulty of dropping a well-placed bomb from a height is very great. But the fact remains that the Bazaar, where

we hoped that the women and children would be perfectly safe, was a long distance from the camp, and still farther away from the trenches. We were now regularly treated to a most interesting aerial display, the ships starting at eight o'clock, and returning at twelve for their "marcaroi," as the Arabs said.

The various villages and camps were all systematically reconnoitred and attacked, with more or less disaster, Zanzur being the greatest sufferer, for we counted from twenty to thirty reports on each occasion, and we heard afterwards that this was the number of bombs carried by the ships. Of course the headquarter camp of Sanii beni Adem was not neglected; our turn came, and the two ships were headed direct for us, swerving very slightly at times. The steady deliberate approach was fascinating to behold, and we watched it with helpless interest as they manœuvred to get into a favourable position for their fell purpose. As I have already observed, my tent was close to headquarters, upon which presumably the first attack would be made. Captain Wake, Major Paget and myself stood together outside my tent, whilst my friends the German officers were grouped at the entrance of theirs near by. Rodênski, I remember, was armed with a Mauser rifle.

The most minute details of the ships focussed themselves on my mind. I tried to make out the number of men upon each, the colours of the flags flying at the stern, and calculated the height at which they were sailing.

Somehow the undulations of the envelope seemed to give them a more terrible and more realistic appearance, almost as if they were panting to attack and destroy us. A slight smoke wafted from their sterns, and caused me to wonder if they carried guns as well as bombs.

They then arose higher and higher, until the figure of the pilot was no longer discernible, but still all the time they were drawing nearer and nearer to a position immediately above us.

I drew in a deep breath, such as a diver might as he looks at the dark waters in which he must plunge many yards below. It was a sensation of fear or apprehension, or an admixture of both. I glanced around the camp, and was interested to see how we all stood, absolutely motionless and still, watching breathlessly for something to happen. It seemed that we were all under the spell of these eerie monsters, as they poised above us for their deadly act.

A slight breeze rustled a piece of paper—the remains of a little bag—at my feet, and I started nervously.

Suddenly very faintly the curious humming, caused by the passage of the bomb falling through the air, broke the silence and broke the spell. I could almost feel the sob of relief from a thousand breasts, before the crash of the explosion took place, as the missile buried itself in the earth about fifty yards from where we were standing. I had my camera ready, and tried to get a snapshot of the ships, but could not focus them

at such an altitude. I was lucky enough, however, to catch a picture of one of the bombs as it burst, a reproduction of which I have included in my illustrations. The ships veered off after dropping fifteen bombs amongst us. Immediately they exploded we ran like excited children to look at the holes that had been made in the ground, and to secure such portions as remained for trophies of our bombardment.

One or two unexploded bombs were brought in during the day. These had fallen on the softer sand and so failed to discharge. These we carefully examined and preserved. I had given particular orders to my servants to take the horses out of the way and to scatter, to lessen the danger so far as possible.

Before the ships reached the camp, Salim mounted my Arab horse, Boy, and flew off across the desert; and the others left me to look after the camp and face the music. These were not desert men, but Arabs from other countries. One of them was a Tripoli man, who afterwards proved to be an Italian spy. Soon after the bombardment was over, and the excitement had calmed down, the valiant Salim returned, minus shoes and hat, sweating and laughing hysterically, and showing every symptom of being dead scared. To use his own words: "Wen I see ballon come, I say dey no kill Boy, but dey kill me too, so I jump on Boy, dey de ballon. He look me; where I ride he come always, come ober where I go. I make gallop; I say dey kill me first, dey kill Boy. Bomb he come one time close. I lose

shoes and cap, come off by de bomb; now I make glad heart he come, he go. Oh, my mister, I feel sick; you no got brandy for give me?"

I borrowed some whisky for him from the Germans; the truth was that the valiant Salim was frightened very nearly out of his wits. He must have ridden my horse for many miles into the desert. The shock and excitement brought on an attack of fever, followed by complications, which laid him up for three months.

There was a sequel some weeks afterwards, when I called upon Beshir Bey, the doctor in charge of the hospital.

I noticed that he was wearing a pair of my slippers, the best I had; a pair that had been a present from my wife. He seemed awfully pleased with them too. On my asking whom he got them from, he told me that he had found them in the sand, outside the camp, about four or five miles off!

The account which I have endeavoured to give of our aerial bombardment would apply to many subsequent occasions, when we had visits of a similar character. One day during the week in which this first experience occurred, we noticed that the Italians were much more active than usual. The drilling grounds in front of Gargerish were ostentatiously paraded every day, whilst reports from our advanced posts kept our small army constantly on the alert, and prepared at any moment to make or to resist an attack, it being uncertain whether their display was

merely a demonstration, or the prelude to a serious advance.

For many days we were kept in this suspense, but late one day the assembly sharply sounded. From every camp the warriors came rushing in, defiling past the Staff towards the front, from whence the desultory sounds of battle were proceeding. As the various tribes came in the excitement increased and intensified. The women were loudly inciting these braves to revenge and glory, but they wanted little inciting! The stallions were squealing, as if they too shared the desires of their owners, and everywhere there was a wild pandemonium of longing for fighting, the one ambition of these fanatical enthusiasts.

There was a chance too for more loot, and that to an Arab is a powerful incentive. Major Paget and I mounted our horses and joined this apparent rabble, which presently formed into some order as we set off. We had some difficulty in keeping up with the Arabs, who, after straining like hounds upon a leash, were now urging on their horses to the fastest of their fleet pace, yelling all the time their battle-cry of "Allah Ackbar!" Nothing could be done to stop their impetuosity. We poured through dusty defiles half-choking with the clouds of fine dust which spread like a flood over the plains.

Sheik Barouni and his war sheiks were as excited as any of them, waving swords and guns to encourage the ardour of the clans. The scene reminded me of

Sir Walter Scott's description of the advance of the Highland clans in *Waverley*.

The mules which were carrying our machine guns appeared to swim through the drifting clouds of dust as they bravely stumbled on through the heavy sand. The constant crackling of musketry, and the booming of cannon, located the whereabouts of the foe. Two hours' scramble brought us to a hummocky country, admirable for our tactics. Right ahead of us was the vast slope of dry sand, like a golden wall which hid the battleground.

With great difficulty our leaders brought the army to a halt, whilst skirmishing parties went ahead to reconnoitre. Now small dots upon the sandhill showed where the scouts were working. They showed some knowledge and sense of military training in the orderly and methodical manner of their skirmishing line, as they breasted the top, disdaining all cover in their eagerness to get at the enemy.

The Italians unintentionally, and without realising it, have provided a splendid military academy for teaching the arts of war. The Arabs now fight with more caution; they even take cover sometimes, and shoot from behind it. The old-fashioned dervish rush on which the Italians had counted was left behind at Suk el Juma and Zwarra.

Sheik Mahomet always says that this is not the Arab way, and is not the bravest, but with numbers and with guns he quite admits the advantage. I crept forward to some point of vantage to get a peep

at the enemy. To my surprise I saw them huddled up in square formation. It seemed that each soldier was gathering courage from feeling the nearness of his neighbour. What could we not have done with a few field guns! Meanwhile the batteries roared and flamed, and shrapnel fell in showers over our scattered forces, doing fortunately little or no damage.

It seemed to me that some parties of the Arabs showed themselves simply for amusement, or that they had come purposely to draw the fire in their direction, for they were running and laughing at the fury of the cannonade which their presence had produced.

Whilst the Italian infantry held the ground before Gargerish, a strong body of cavalry advanced during the night towards Fonduk Bu Gashir, upon our right flank. Reinforcements were immediately sent by perhaps the most wonderful forced march on record. The distance might, roughly speaking, be estimated at twenty miles, and the body actually outflanked the Italians, who retired towards Ain Zara. In the early hours of the morning they ran into the Arabs, and a wild panic and the most disgraceful retreat took place, for the Arabs were hopelessly outnumbered. Then, missing the road, they found themselves swallowed up in the sandy hillocks of the desert sand, and blundering wildly on, they soon got separated. Like wolves, the Arab warriors followed, and outstripping the fastest horses, a fierce fight and a terrible butchery followed.

Very soon the battle of Gargerish was decided, and horses, arms, jewellery, loot of every sort and description, found its way to the bazaars of Azizia and Zarwia.

For once these fearless fighters had succeeded in enticing their fearful invaders to what they always longed for—a hand-to-hand fight; and if it had occurred a score of times there could never be any question as to the result. They have no battleships, no airships, no bombs, nor any of the usual accompaniments of modern warfare; but they have strong arms and brave hearts, and a strong sense of justice, and thus equipped they are not pleasant enemies to meet face to face.

The rout was complete; nothing saved the remnant of the enemy's cavalry but the greed of the Arabs, who will always waste precious time in securing their booty before continuing the pursuit. No persuasion or threat whatever could alter this trait in their character, or enable them to conquer it.

Neshet Bey offered to pay a fair estimate of the value in good solid gold, but the old proverb of a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush is their accepted maxim.

The course of the fugitives was well defined by the dead and the heavy articles which strewed the plain. It was a great victory, but one from which the Turks gained little but the wholesome respect and dread of the enemy.

After this life flowed along more easily and

quietly. The dirigibles and aeroplanes passed daily when the winds were not too strong, but we scarcely regarded them. We were expecting a gun to keep them away. The Italians only possessed two dirigibles, but we heard rumours of the coming of a third one, No. III. This was said to be fitted with a gun. Had they had a dozen or more no doubt our camps would have become untenable. About this time, at Sanii beni Adem, the dreaded typhoid fever made its appearance, and several soldiers succumbed to it.

Muheddin decided to move the camp, for, as he said, the desert was wide, and we had plenty of room in the choice of new sites. There was a garden, surrounded by huge walls, in a tolerably fair state of repair; it also possessed a well, and it was at this time tenanted by a small body of Turkish infantry. Each soldier lived like a landed proprietor. Date, mulberry, apricot, and other trees shaded the place and supplied them with fuel.

Major Paget and I marked out a tree under which we proposed to put up the tent for our mutual accommodation. But Muheddin decided, perhaps wisely, upon an open space in the sand; and a few hours sufficed to move the camp and all its belongings. The horses, like big dogs, seemed to appreciate the change. As we approached our new abode, half a dozen of them came to meet us with open mouths and nostrils, challenging our steeds to play or mortal combat, as they felt inclined.

The new site was well chosen. There was a garden upon a slight rise, which the headquarters secured for the mess tent and commissariat. In a slight depression there was a second well filled in with rubbish, and near by were the remains of an underground house. We pitched our tent in this little dip, for the bank would break the force of the winds and there was also some little privacy. In digging out the old well we came across the stones of an ancient olive mill and other records of a flourishing past. The spot too was nearer to the fighting line, and well out of range of the ships' guns, both most desirable advantages.

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CHAPTER XII

A FEW REMINISCENCES

ONE morning when I was approaching the completion of my not over elaborate toilet, Salim, who was cleaning my boots with exertion, in the unavoidable absence of boot polish, called my attention to the approach of a messenger. It was necessarily slow, as he was somewhat heavily laden, and moreover was leading by a cord a little fat woolly lamb. With profound obeisance he presented to me the good wishes of my friend Sheik Barouni, his master, who with many kind messages requested the acceptance of the lamb, which he said should be roasted whole, a jar of oil, and a bottle of milk.

In the message he kindly referred to me as his father, an expression which in the East, as is generally known, is one of great respect and regard. I returned my paternal greetings, assured him of my very genuine affection, and invited him to call and eat and take coffee with me.

This may appear to be a very trivial incident to record, but it recurs to me now with very pleasant feeling and memory, as being illustrative of the gentle courtesy and kindly heart of these charming people. Salim took charge of the little animal, and fortunately we were able to feed him

well with the choicest herbs and grass, both of which were easily accessible.

He was great fun for a time, and eventually became so tame that, instead of keeping him tied up to a stake outside the kitchen tent, he was allowed to roam about with the freedom of a dog.

My establishment at this time had grown to such large proportions that I had many serious misgivings as to how expenses were to be met, but Salim was certainly a wonderful manager. I had six persons besides him to assist me in various ways.

One of them, an Arab captain named Abdullah, hailed from Mecca, or "Mukka" as Salim pronounced it, but he was anything but a holy man. He had the best Arab traits. He was generous, brave as a lion, but he had one fatal weakness, a too keen appreciation of palm-wine, and when it happened, as it frequently did, that he gave way to it, his head got on fire and he saw red.

There was Orian, short and stocky, who was supposed to look to the grooming of the horses. His idea of grooming was to brush them lightly over and the operation was finished. Two or three boys assisted in fetching and carrying. At the hour before sunset, when the work was supposed to be finished for the day, one youngster would play with the lamb, of which he had become very fond. This was all very well at first, but the lamb thrived and grew in strength as well as in size, so that after one or two butting competitions, in which the

boy came off second-best, the animal had to be tethered with the horses.

Visiting used to take up a deal of my time. One day I would make a whole round of calls. First I went to the tent of the Germans, where I was amused by watching the antics of a pet monkey which they had. He was fond of chasing the Arab children, who took the keenest delight in his mischievous gambols, but, like the lamb, he lost his popularity somewhat after biting someone too hard. Then I visited the officers' tents, and finally that of Izak or Muheddin, where we drank tea or coffee. Whatever these dear kind people have, the best is not good enough for the stranger that is within their gates. At sunset I would hurry back to our camp ere darkness fell.

It was very easy to lose oneself. One evening Major Paget and I were returning from one of these rounds of calls when we entirely lost our way, although the tent was within a hundred yards. We were blundering about when Paget remarked, "It must be somewhere about here." As if in reply a fervent "Ba-a!" came from almost at our feet. We overwhelmed the beast with caresses, and vowed that we would never kill him.

One afternoon there was tremendous excitement. The guards rushed to their horses, and all the soldiers were quickly under arms, thinking that the Italians were on the move. I hurried to the commandant's tent to get the news. I found Muheddin,

Izak Bey, and the officers anxiously watching the telephone. Then the tension was relaxed, and was succeeded by an explosion of laughter.

The information was of the capture of a *bœuf italienne*. Rumours came flying in then that it was a herd of bullocks that had been secured, and the whole population hurried off in the direction of Gargerish. Presently a dark cluster of Arabs gesticulating and laughing came in sight. Then we noticed a stalwart pair of horns in the midst of them. As they came nearer the noise increased to an uproar. In the centre of the group, frothing and furious, marched the one solitary bull. A dozen Arabs held him by ropes which were tied to every conceivable limb, even round his ears.

The weight of the seething mob urged him forward, whilst the guy ropes from the horns steadied him. Everyone was shouting advice and instructions, until at last the beast was halted in front of the commandant's tent, when after being duly handed over as spoils of war it was graciously backsheeshed to the Arabs. He was butchered with some ceremony, for nothing would do but that he must be despatched with an Italian bayonet.

This was soon done, and five minutes later there was not so much as a drop of blood left upon the thirsty sand to mark the spot where the last tragedy took place. The horns afterwards formed part of our little museum.

The space around the commandant's tent was

generally littered with all sorts of articles, a miscellaneous collection of loot, the products of Arab raiding parties, wheelbarrows, trenching tools, and spades. Fancy carrying a wheelbarrow over sixteen miles of desert rather than leave it behind. On one occasion at Zanzur a big telegraph post was cast up by the sea, and was taken about a mile inland and left upon the sand.

The work and trouble of fishing this cumbersome piece of loot out of the sea and up the cliffs always remain in my mind as a monument of Arab industry. They secure anything they possibly can in the hope that at some time it may be useful in some way.

The domestic valuation of his belongings is generally placed in the following order: the horse he rides, the gun with which he is such an expert shot, and then his wife. I do not mean that he is unkind to her or neglectful of her, but the home life as we understand it necessarily takes up a very small portion of his life. The horse is indeed one of the most charming of companions, as he stands picketed and spanned outside your tent.

The Arab method of doing this is most effective, for the two front legs and one of the hind legs are fastened together on the principle of a crow's-foot mooring for vessels, for at certain seasons the animals become almost unmanageable. In the hands of the Arabs he is well under control, for the cruel bit with a plate of iron and the huge shoe stirrups enable them to keep him in order by brute force.

I have frequently seen a rider deposited on the sand whilst the stallions fight. It can easily be understood that for this reason they are the most undesirable horses imaginable for picket work, as they are rarely actually docile, as a gelding is.

And yet after my experience of the Arabs, and some knowledge of their thoughts about their horses and their feelings towards them, I can understand why they object to having them interfered with in any way, and I very soon began to appreciate and sympathise with the instincts of the Mussulmans in this matter. And this too in spite of the fact that I had plenty of trouble with my own particular spirited steed.

They never intentionally kick or harm a human being. I have heard of rare instances where people have been badly hurt, but that has most likely occurred whilst trying to stop a fight.

When the "assembly" is sounded the call is taken up by the Arab war drums, which sound the tocsin from camp to camp. As the native braves draw in the wildest excitement ensues. When the different cavalry regiments get together the excitement is intense, and the shouting of the men, the waving of their banners, and the beating of the drums, seem to drive the horses frantic with excitement. The animals of the various tribes go for each other as if they were demons of vengeance with long-forgotten feuds. The loose horses amongst the mob clear a way with their hoofs, and then, when they reach some

companion which seems to be particularly obnoxious, a battle-royal takes place, and it is only with a certain amount of risk that they are separated.

Notwithstanding the total lack of organisation from a European standpoint, these Arabs "get there" all the same. Their requirements are so small; each man, as a matter of fact, takes care of himself and his horse. The latter he often neglects, possibly through carelessness, possibly through force of circumstances, but there is a bond of sympathy between the Arab and his steed, and both seem equally tolerant of hard times and short commons.

This discipline of hardship makes them the finest mounted infantry in the world. Therefore the want of all the cumbersome transport which is necessary to modern European armies is not felt by the Arabs.

CHAPTER XIII

A VISIT FROM ALI PASHA

One day we had a visit from Ali Pasha, son of the late Abdul Kadir, who was the renowned sheik who fought the French for thirty years. Ali's mission was a noble one, to stir up enthusiasm and inspire the forces with the confidence that victory would come to them in the end. The roar of many voices, the rumble of drums, and the cracking of rifles heralded Ali's approach long before he came in sight.

Then the cavalry flew in an irregular body straight at the head of the column, either reining up their horses as they reached them, or riding right through the lines, embracing, kissing, and showing by every means their delight at the coming of their hero. Next Ali and his sheiks charged down upon us, and we received him with open arms, salaams, and prayers upon all sides as they escorted him to the tent that had been prepared for his reception.

After a short rest and some light refreshment we joined forces, and started out in a body to a beautifully level spot at the eastern end of the tents. Horsemen circled us like birds, finally dropping into their appointed places. Women, beggars, musicians, jugglers, —all the Bohemian element in the place—assisted to give us a good send-off.

When we reached the appointed place, we formed up in one big irregular square for inspection by Muheddin.

The Turkish officers escorted Ali and his son, who had been named Abdul Kadir, after his distinguished grandfather. At intervals Ali would make a short impassioned speech as he halted again and again during his progress down the lines.

The inspection over, the tournament began. The space inside the square was about five or six acres in area. At one end the horsemen took their station. A succession of sand billows gave ideal vantage-ground to the crowds of sightseers, our old Bohemian friends amongst them.

There was no spear-breaking, but some of the finest riding I ever saw. Whole groups of horsemen charged wildly at each other, time after time, only swerving aside just before the very moment of contact, their *hrams* flying wildly behind them, mingling with the tails of their horses.

Then they had mock combats with sword and spear. Riding in pairs was quite a pretty turn; the riders started arm in arm, their rifles held to their shoulders all the time, their horses being guided by the pressure of the knee. After riding and swirling at a terrific pace, the course was finished by the simultaneous discharge of their rifles.

Some of the most daring and accomplished of these expert riders, whilst riding at a great pace, reached down from their saddles and picked up a

handful of sand from the ground, and threw it into the air above their heads as they flew past.

One horseman jumped off his horse, ran under the animal's belly in its stride, and mounted again without slackening the quick pace. Ali and his son are both expert riders, and gave us many examples of skill and daring. It made a wonderfully fine picture, this circus desert-show in the blazing sunshine, the riders in their white *hrams*, the caparisoned chargers in red, blue, yellow and green, with silver-mounted harness, and a background of grim drab-coloured warriors who were chanting their wild war-hymns all the time. It was a glow of colour, a power of motion.

The mharrie, or running camels, were then put through their paces. Their stride is tremendous, and their speed exceeds that of the swiftest horse.

One of the riders was thrown, and he must have pitched at least fifty feet and rolled over and over. But he was up again in a second, and on his beast in another two or three, racing and capering as if nothing unusual had happened. The day ended with a feast, at which all the principal sheiks were present.

Carpets were laid down in a long row, and the Turkish soldiers who were told off to act in the capacity of waiters and cooks quickly set the meat before us. The chief dish was lamb roasted whole, and we must have consumed quite a small flock of them.

We sat ourselves down in small messes round

the dishes, eating with Nature's forks. I squatted next to Sheik Barouni, helping him to carve, perhaps I should say dismember, the particular animal that had been placed before us. Their manner of eating has often been criticised, but when you consider that the Mussulman is always most particular in washing both before and after meat, their habits are not so very objectionable.

Our beverage was of course water. A Turkish sweet known as "Hulwah" came next, and coffee as usual concluded the repast.

During the night we had rather an unusual experience. About midnight we were disturbed by the tent falling on the top of us, and we awoke in a cloud of sand and a roar of wind. The servants spent an hour endeavouring to secure the tent against the hurricane, but all their efforts were unavailing.

Fortunately the sand piled over our baggage and gear, most effectively hiding and keeping them secure. To make matters worse, three stallions that had broken loose chose this particular spot for their fighting-ground, so that with their screaming and kicking and flying heels, the terrible wind, and the driving sand, there was no small stir among us. The brutes were captured by the horse-guard, who managed to get hold of them, heaven knows how, in all that turmoil and blackness. But the Turkish soldier is an expert at the task, horse-catching being one of his daily duties. All the horse-gear seemed to be more or less rotten, and horses appeared

to break loose at will, although the device for catching these errant steeds is simplicity itself.

There is the first burst and off goes the fugitive, until he is lost sight of in the undulations of the open desert. Two loutish-looking soldiers follow him slowly, casually carrying a long rope. Then, each of them holding an end, they come within sight of the deserter.

The animal immediately enters into the fun, and fully appreciates his part of the performance. He takes a positive delight in playing with them, for he waits until they are almost on him and then off he goes, tossing his lovely head and elevating up his flowing tail as if in derision.

But the wily Tommy bides his time, circling him and always coming nearer. With the end of the rope dragging, each man passes on either side. Then the rope is pulled taut in front of him, the centre being level with his chest; the pursuers run round and round, tying him up, and one of them takes him by the forelock and leads him back.

In the darkest night, when you cannot see anything, they employ this antiquated method quite successfully, guided by sound alone. There was one great and ever-present and abiding trouble from which we were never free, and that was the prevalence of insect life, an unavoidable annoyance in spite of the most careful efforts at cleanliness.

There was also the scorpion, of which there are two kinds, the black and the yellow, and it was my fate to experience the unwelcome attentions of

both specimens. One night I was bitten by something that I knew to possess a better grip than the inevitable flea, and I guessed what it was by the burning sting. I struck a light and discovered a couple of young scorpions in bed with me. They had slept together most amicably until perhaps I had become too restless, and then they had indicated their disapproval of my presence by stinging me on the knee. Dr. Beshir Bey came like an angel of mercy, and with the careful use of a lancet and some strong ammonia, which he rubbed vigorously into the incision that he made, the pain soon became easier. He put a bandage on, and the next day, with the exception of a pain in my groin, I was nearly well and able to get about. These scorpions were a pair of the yellow variety.

The next time I was lucky not to get stung by a big black one that had crawled up the folds of my overcoat and ensconced himself under the collar close to my neck. Salim noticed and caught him with two sticks which he used like a pair of tongs. Achmet, another servant, looked at the dead animal with great contempt and said, "I don't care for scorpions; I crush them in my hand—so"—imitating the motion, but I found that he had never tried the game on one of them, and it was simply an idle boast. I told a friend of mine named Nouri Bey of the incident, and he said, "Well, we never have any trouble with scorpions because we keep chickens, which search for them and eat them." This is worth knowing.

CHAPTER XIV

A VISIT TO ZANZUR

My next visit was to Zanzur, for I had a fancy for sea-bathing and fishing. Ali Pasha and his entourage were staying there with my friend Tahar, the commandant. Zanzur was distant about two hours, and it was rather a favourite ride of mine. There is a great variety of desert, and several tiny oases which help to break the monotony of the desert rides. Then, too, there is a bracing feeling in the air and the ozone of the sea. The troops were camped amongst the gardens of the west end, and a shady road takes you to the bazaar.

Tahar welcomed me heartily. He was full of enthusiasm about some new trenches that he was constructing a couple of miles nearer to the fort. The Italians did not know anything of them, I was told, because all the work had been done at night-time. It was discovered later that the Italians did know, and what is more, they had photo-charts of all the positions taken by the aerial corps; but this is by the way.

We went out to see the trenches and were fired at, which was always part of the show. It gives a little sensation of excitement, and there is rarely any particular danger. It was evident that in the Italian imagination the desert swarmed with Arabs, and if a

solitary Arab horseman showed against the skyline it was enough to start all the cannon in Tripoli, reinforced by the ships' guns banging away thousands of pounds into the sand of the desert. I was often under the impression that there must be some very heavy fighting, here or there, but I found by experience that what I have stated was generally the explanation of a senseless bombardment.

I spent a very pleasant time at the Kazan and often listened to Ali Pasha exhorting the Arabs, preaching to them in the old square. It was interesting to watch the earnest faces of the hearers and to see the impulsive clutch as the hand tightened on the sword or rifle. That was my last visit to Zanzur, and I recall it with pleasure: the sensuous sunshine, backed by luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation, but alas! poverty stalks with bounty. Nature is prodigal in response to the efforts of the husbandman, but the systematic labour required to develop the land is not in the nature of these children of the Prophet. They humbly toil, but the primitive implements—the ploughs—are of wood, pulled by camels. The prongs scarcely scratch the ground, the instrument being too light in construction. But the camels fill the air with their bitter lamentations over this comparatively light task. This is because the farmer is always in a hurry and drives him out of his dignified stride. Man and beast express equally the utter weariness of labour. The land is extremely fertile, and under proper cultivation would most undoubtedly give splendid results.

It is the apathy, if not the indolence, of these men that makes one fearful as to their ability eventually to get the upper hand of their enemies. Their qualities are excellent; their faith in God and their devotion to their cause are beautiful to witness, but I would sooner see amongst them more of the principle which, admitting the beauty of faith in God, at the same time insists upon the desirability of keeping the powder dry and the sword sharpened!

With the approach of spring the hot winds blew from the south with the greatest fury, overwhelming the camp with clouds of dust. Scarcely a day passed without a number of tents being blown down and other damage and inconvenience being caused. The whole world of insect pests concentrated and sought cover in the only available shelters, causing strife between them and human beings.

These winds, although scourges in themselves, were not altogether an unmixed evil, for they kept the Italians within their trenches and effectually stopped all aerial flights. I therefore resolved to take advantage of these circumstances and to visit Khoms. This town lies to the east, and marks the limit of Neshet's jurisdiction. The ancient name of Khoms was Lybda, where are still to be seen some most perfect Roman ruins. At that time unfortunately the Italians had occupied the harbour, but as that portion of the old city lay some kilometres to the eastward, I was in hope of being able to inspect them. So, packing up the tent, Major Paget and I

started on our long journey. The horses were fresh and the camels were well and fat, and we looked forward to a pleasant trip. The first day we bivouacked at Azizia, and pitched our camp there to enable us to revisit our Turkish friends. We intended to start at sundown, as we preferred to ride through the cool of the night, it being better both for men and horses to travel then.

We struck the mountain pass easily the next morning, resting through the heat of the day by the clear spring, shaded by a thick clump of palm-trees, commencing the ascent of the pass at 4 P.M. We reached Gherien at sunset, where we had the luxury of a bath, an excellent dinner, and some cold beer—a special brew—at the German Red Cross hospital, where they treated us with the greatest hospitality and begged us to prolong our stay.

That night we slept in the hospital, but on the following day we put up our tent beneath the shade of some ancient olive-trees that formed, so to speak, the garden of the hospital. The site of this camp was most picturesque, it being surrounded with olive-groves; several of the trees of a size and girth that might well compare with those upon the Mount of Olives. The bracing breezes from the mountain uplands brought fresh life and vigour to the sick and wounded.

Words fail to express my admiration for the men who worked and served under Dr. Gœbel. Unfortunately the time of the Red Cross there was draw-

ing towards a close. It was most pathetic to notice the regret of the Arabs and the Turks. These kind-hearted people showed their gratitude to the doctors and nurses who composed it by every means in their power.

The camp was laid out with German thoroughness. There were six large marquees, each of which accommodated from thirty to forty patients. Cooking and scavenging were most scrupulously attended to, and the water, the cause of so much sickness in that country, was always filtered and boiled. At a short distance from the camp a squad of washer-women were employed all day in keeping the linen scrupulously clean.

The officers' quarters occupied about a third of the compound. The mess-room was in the open air, two long tables being fixed to the ground and shaded all day by the foliage of a big olive-tree. The staff consisted of two German and two Turkish doctors. The routine was carried out with the greatest regularity, and at five o'clock every day one or other of the doctors spent two hours in attending to the medical needs of the whole district, which was no easy task. I have noticed as many as fifty or sixty patients crowding into the room for advice and treatment.

Originally built by the Turks for a schoolhouse, the hospital contained a room that had been fitted up for operations. Another had been arranged for the Röntgen rays with as much care and attention

to detail as any of the great European institutions. Whilst we were there one of the German nurses—the third victim of duty and Christianity—died, and that evening, as the sun sank, his remains were lowered into a vault. The ceremony was simple and impressive. Carried to his last resting-place by his German colleagues, followed by the grateful Turks and Arabs, the funeral cortege wound its short way to a shady corner in a peaceful clump of olives. After the ceremony, during which Christians and Mahomedans stood there hand in hand—East and West thus being united in the sacred bonds of brotherhood—one could not help condemning the craft and statecraft which brought so much misery upon the country. No one could have listened to the fervent address of the Bey without having responsive feelings with regard to the duties of man to man, of nation to nation. There is but one God—the Father of All.

Paget and I occasionally strolled about the bazaar—our walks extending to the Kazan to watch the flitting of the shadows over the plain. We also visited the Italian prisoners. One of them whose name was Gargano, and who was assisting at the German hospital—thus enjoying a brief spell of comparative liberty—expressed himself as being satisfied with the treatment he had received.

When the Red Cross left, Gargano was given the choice of remaining and of working with the Turks, but he refused to do this, his reason being

that he objected to assisting the enemy of his country.

No objection was offered to our giving the prisoners cigarettes or tobacco. Since my last visit the number of prisoners had been increased by the taking of some of the Askaris—or Masowah—from the black battalions which the Italians had imported from Masowah, and upon whom fell the brunt of the fighting.

For some strange reason I cannot explain, I had an indefinable sensation that something had changed in the appearance of the camp, but I thought nothing more of it. That evening, however, a report spread through the hospital camp that three prisoners had escaped. Instinctively I knew who they were, and I afterwards found that they were the blacks. Their time of liberty proved short, and the only use they made of it was to walk over the stony mountains for seven or eight hours without either food or water, when the torment of thirst drove them to the only spring, which they found at the foot of the pass. Here, however, they tumbled right into the arms of the zeptirs who had been sent after them. One of the zeptirs afterwards said, "No one ever gets away here. We only have to ride and watch the waters. Thou knowest, O Hadji, every one must drink." A number of Arabs waited all day to see the return of the recaptured blacks. They were marched in by the zeptirs at sunset, nearly naked, weary, hungry and thirsty, with wild-looking eyes. What

happened to them eventually I did not hear, but I think their punishment was not severe.

Our friends the Germans left shortly afterwards, and the whole district turned out to give them a good send-off, while women wailed as the little company disappeared at a turn of the winding road. With magnificent generosity they presented the whole outfit—tent, baggage, medicine, &c.—to the Turkish doctors. This splendid gift was estimated at a monetary value of ten thousand pounds. But beyond mere material value, this present was a record of brotherly love which was highly valued.

After leaving the hospital camp we journeyed along the top of the Jebel mountain, sleeping one night on the roof of a house, and partaking of the hospitality of the village sheik who lived underground. The second day we reached Tarhuna, an ordinary Arab town. A long day's march brought us to Meslata, a place of some importance, situated amongst beautiful olive-groves. The most noteworthy object was an ancient fort, standing on the summit of a remarkable isolated mountain which dominated the town and the surrounding country.

The massive walls, "four square to the wind," enclose an area of a dozen acres or more. The ancient gateway is broken down; the wild olive and the fig flourish on its decay. Inside, the donjon or keep lies in ruins, piled up over a labyrinth of underground passages, the mystery of which will in all probability always remain in obscurity.

We mounted the old walls, where the proverbial coach-and-four might have run easily. At either corner, bastions, strong and solid enough to mount a 12-inch gun, bore testimony to the thoroughness of the work. We stayed there for a long time speculating and wondering in regard to the past history of the fort. Whoever built it possessed the mind of an engineer of no mean attainments. The crests of several distant hills showed simpler works.

The zeptir who accompanied us broke into our musings to point out Merkab Mountain dominating Khoms. Through our glasses we could distinguish the new fort built by the Italians.

Hallal Bey, brother of the redoubtable Enver, commanded this district. His headquarters are prettily situated in an olive garden. A fine old ruined temple ornaments the hill which shelters this happy valley. Our old friend Nazmi was there as second in command. We put up our tent, intending to spend a few days in visiting the neighbourhood.

Lybda is some fifteen kilometres away, and for a time it was in the hands of the Italians, who had rushed the Mount of Merkab, which covers the harbour and town with its guns, and built an impregnable fort. It was armed with four big guns and some field-pieces and plenty of quick-firers. Our advanced post was stationed on Mount Hunnan, opposite Merkab, and distant seven kilometres.

There are two or three ways of reaching Hunnan, but this is rather a dangerous one. One face of

Merkab overlooks a portion of the road running through a narrow ravine. A five minutes' gallop clears us, and we jog on leisurely through the bed of a mountain torrent which is now dry. Winding our way through and about the tortuous twists of the channel, we ascend a stair-like precipice and suddenly come in full sight of the town and harbour with its shipping guarded by a cruiser.

We scamper over the uplands in full view of the Italian ship for half a mile, but no shell comes screaming after us. This was a matter of good luck, for sometimes they shoot at small convoys. We next crossed a dangerous ravine with breakneck approaches, the key to Hunnan, turning the shoulder of the mountain.

We rode into the camp of the advance post. As the day was young, we decided to start after lunch to see this Italian position. A series of goat-tracks led us to the summit, where in the ruined chambers of a venerable temple the outposts rested. Selecting our way carefully through titanic masses of fallen masonry to reach the extreme verge of Mount Hunnan, a breastwork of boulder protected the picket, who watched night and day. A superb vision was here presented to our eyes. The dreamy blue haze of the sea enveloped earth and sky, half veiling the scene, a Turner landscape being thus produced. Into this blue mystery ran a golden tongue on which stand fairy-like buildings of creamy white. The golden beach curved in a crescent, half enclosing

a limpid bay reflecting the golden sand and the cream-coloured buildings. The blue sheet of water was broken by crape bands, created by the soft zephyrs as they kissed the polished surface of the water.

A broad alluvial plain stretches to the belt of palms that encircle this fairy scene, through which a dry river-bed meanders, dividing the ancient Lybda in two parts. That on the east contains the celebrated Roman Arch and portions of a Coliseum, with other specimens of stately architecture.

Recumbent statues, columns, and plinths block the old streets. The desert has preserved for the searcher the secrets of those days. Drift-sand, to the depth of fifty feet in many places, conceals and preserves treasures of history. Like Moses we were only to see the Promised Land. As we looked towards the town we saw the busy Italians constructing earthworks, forts, trenches, and entanglements. Forts linked by curtain-walls ran out to the river's brink. We were within a couple of thousand yards of the Italians, and we could distinguish small parties of the enemy now and again through our glasses. We could also see some officers looking at us.

These forts, strong as they were, had been surprised and captured by the Arabs, who destroyed two small guns and killed the defenders. It might have been a more successful surprise had not an enthusiastic sheik pulled down the Italian flag. Merkab Fort thereupon opened fire with its heavy guns,

rendering the position untenable and making it possible for the Italians to recover the forts. Much loot was secured by the Arabs, but practically no material gain resulted from this heroic effort through lack of artillery.

Pathetic interest was excited by the letters from anxious wives and sweethearts found on the Italian dead. The Italian standard—a fine new flag some six feet by twelve—was captured, as well as rifles, equipment, clothes, and caps. The flag was afterwards sent to Azizia, where our stay was shortened owing to the heat of the weather. Every hour the sun seemed to gain in power. Travelling by day was nearly impossible, and the prospect of a summer in the hot dusty plains was not inviting. At Azizia we parted, for Paget went home.

CHAPTER XV

HOMEWARD BOUND

As I pass through the lonely oases on my way to Ben Garidane I note all the old familiar sights, such as Sir Conan Doyle depicts in his vivid description of the "Pilgrim's Way" in *Sir Nigel.* We have the free-lance in the Arab horseman with gaily caparisoned steed neighing defiance as he goes swinging by; the marabouts (holy men) journeying from one tomb to another; merchants from Tunis with sugar, tea, luxuries, and clothes for the army; beggars and travelling artisans.

The hedge stake is represented by the seller of palm-wine. The musicians, with pipes, drums, and cymbals, beguile the tedium of the slowly moving caravan; petty dealers display their dusty wares by the wayside under the sheltering palms. It is the life of the road, as old as the hills. We drink from Roman draw-wells, the very same at which, centuries before, the thirsty soldiers of Assyria quenched their thirst. It was a diorama of olden times and olden customs.

Finally we were at Zwarra once more. The redoubtable Musa Mahomet had left for Stamboul, and Abdul Kadir, an old friend, was in command. There my stay was brief, but, owing to the Italian occu-

pation of Bukemesh, I was unable to travel by my old route. I therefore made for the frontier by way of Zelten, where I met Mahmud Bey, who commanded there in place of another Mahmud Bey who had been wounded by an Italian shell.

A battle arrested my progress for two days, which I spent with the Arabs, dressing their wounds, &c., although many stoutly refused my proffered assistance, proudly displaying their "decorations" as they called them. One old sheik who had been shot through the scalp said, "To-day's fight was a picnic." The Italians came out without their artillery. In this they showed wisdom, as they probably would have lost the guns. My kind host saw me to the frontier.

Tunis once more! I spent a few days in this delightful city, the "Paris of Africa." Taking leave of my Arab friends—some of the kindest and warmest-hearted men I have met—three days later found me at home for a holiday.

The more I have seen of Turkey and the more I know about her and her people, the more I am attached to her cause. Europe has treated this fine, generous race with a callous brutality that fills my soul with indignation. The Turks are being consistently and grossly misrepresented and maligned. Although the real Mussulman cannot fail to be known at all the Chancelleries of Europe, his religion is looked down upon by materialistic peoples who seem to be incapable of doing them justice. The

Mahomedan has a simple, touching faith such as we once encouraged. As children of the desert they are more in touch with the dignity and solemnity of nature and nearer to God.

The future of this earth lies in the hands of the city-dweller, who tears the soul from his body in the restless speed of modern life. Is it worth it?

A Christian friend, a really good man too, gravely told me "The worst of the Turk is that he is not a business man—he wastes too much of his time in prayers." One thing he is not ashamed of, and that is his religion.

BOOK II

THE BALKANS

DERKOS
BLACK SEA
BOSPHORUS
TCHALCA FORTS
HADEM KEUI
CONSTANTINOPLE
ASIA MINOR
STAMBUL
BYUK CHEKMEDCE
SEA OF MARMORA

CHAPTER I

THE WAR CLOUD BURSTS

TURKEY was driven to declare war against the allied nations—Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Servia—on the 17th of October, 1912.

Rumours had reached England that fighting was already in progress; that the Bulgarian army had crossed the frontier, and were actually at Kourtkale, eight miles inside the Turkish frontier; that three Bulgarian armies were concentrated at Mustafa Pasha, to the north-west of Adrianople; and that the Turks had retired on the Kirk Kilisse lines, leaving a strong force to defend Adrianople.

The Central News wished me to proceed to Servia, but my inclinations veered to the Turkish side. Thither I went to represent my old paper, *The Illustrated London News*, as their special artist. It is not my province to record the operations of the Allies, but to describe the facts and circumstances of the campaign from the Turkish side as I saw them. I only mention this, as rumours affected to some extent my plans for getting to the front via Sofia.

At a big tourist agency I was informed that they would only book me as far as Vienna. From that point I had to look after myself, for several of my confrères had already departed via Marseilles,

taking the Messagerie boat. The chief objection to this charming route was, of course, time, and events were moving swiftly.

After consulting several railway maps I decided to book to Constantinople, via Constanza, the Roumanian port on the Black Sea. It was a rather roundabout route, but it had the advantage of running through neutral countries. I went via Berlin, and it was my good fortune there to meet a German war correspondent. We agreed to chum together for the journey, which proved to be a very great advantage to me, he being a good linguist and speaking several languages, including Roumanian.

It was necessary to change at the frontier of that country, and to cross it in order to catch the train from Bucharest at Itskania.

Night travelling is always disagreeable; at least it is to me. I was glad of the chance of a break in the journey, for it enabled me to stop at Itskania. I found that the hotels there were fairly good and not expensive.

Roumania is for the most part flat—not unlike the Russian steppes; but the rich soil there produces millions of bushels of wheat and other cereals, whilst on the remaining vast tracts countless herds of cattle and horses grazed, as well as sheep.

We crossed the turbid waters of the Danube, over one of the longest bridges in Europe, of which the people are justly proud. Constanza is a thriving city, destined to become famous on account of its

WITH THE TURKS IN THRACE.

grain trade and the recently developed Galician oil fields. It is noted also for having given to the world that sweet poetess and writer, Carmen Sylva, the Royal lady who rules over Roumania's social destinies.

Beautiful suburbs are branching out in all directions, and the fine natural harbour, much improved by artificial methods, is crowded with shipping.

We availed ourselves here of the hospitality of the Constanza Hotel, in consequence of some slight delay in regard to my baggage, and a telegraphic difficulty experienced by my *compagnon de voyage*.

Apparently the war was not creating much interest at Constanza, excepting among the commercial community, which anticipated future profit in the sale to the combatants of grain and cattle.

In the centre of the town is an irregular square where, as in other cities, the *élite* promenade, or sit at the open-air café. Here they bask in the glorious sunshine and admire the charming views of the glistening sea, while listening to the strains of a really good military band, which includes in its selections Rag-time, as well as other justly appreciated American "coon" music.

Starting on the final stage of our journey at 11 P.M. the next night, we steamed through the picturesque Bosphorus on the following morning. In the Straits we had full opportunity of realising that history is writ large in mountain and in masonry. Not the least interesting is the diversity

of the colour of the shipping and its variety in shape. In spite of the current and contrary winds, the Straits can show a greater number of sailing vessels than any other part of the world. Even the ancient galley is to be seen darting along with a dozen men toiling at the sweeps.

At midday we tied up alongside the wharf at Galata. To clear your baggage through the Custom-house of Galata you have to fight your way through touts and all conditions of men to one small window at the far end of a long narrow shed. There is no method —you drift with the eddying current. At times you are pushed by the throng to within a few feet of the window; then suddenly you are surged by a contrary eddy and carried hopelessly away from it. There is a babel of many tongues. Turks, Arabs, Greeks, French and Germans are all shouting in high-pitched voices. We got through at last, and took a deep breath as we emerged into the open thoroughfare. We were glad after the exhausting process to get a carriage to drive to Hotel Tokatlian at Pera.

The narrow street swarmed with people, but I was recognised at once by old Salim, my Tripoli servant and friend, and without any questions he assumed his old position, and came with me to my hotel, much to the disgust of a tout who had taken me under his wing on board the boat, and probably saw that his backsheesh would be diminished. I found Salim invaluable with his intimate knowledge of Stamboul. By the way, Salim talks in a dozen tongues and

knows everybody; in fact he is a "character" and a favourite, and he is treated quite as an equal, although, like most characters, he has his defects.

Mahomedans are naturally very condescending among themselves. "We are all equal, save one, and that is the Sultan," is one of their sayings. There is a curious freedom of intercourse between masters and servants, which the latter rarely or never presume upon. They know their places. You wish to see the Sultan—Salim manages it. You would like to speak to Kiamil Pasha—you have only to tell Salim, and it is arranged. His principle is to keep himself well in evidence and let his voice be heard, and this is quite permissible amongst the faithful.

I once asked a Kaimakhan why he permitted a prisoner to cry out his grievances before him. He replied: "If he did not, how could he be heard?"

On one occasion I wanted to ask some small favour from the War Minister. Salim walked me straight into his presence and said, "Dere! the Pasha; speak to him, you big man." In no country on earth is access to great men in high places so easy as in Turkey. But it is the character of the race. Their kind, benign, fatherly feelings make them hesitate to hurt the susceptibilities of anyone.

Turkey, like Japan, cuts the negative out of her vocabulary. The War Office and Sublime Porte—official Turkey—work in Stamboul.

Officers fill the cafés, drinking their coffee while settling the fate of Moslem. One of their favourite

haunts is Hotel Meseret. It faces you as you walk up to the Sublime Porte from the ferry. I took a room there, intending to transfer myself and my baggage to Stamboul, but I am not acquainted with the Turkish language, which naturally made it impossible to locate myself there, although I should have much preferred to have stayed, as I greatly appreciate Turkish manners and customs.

Very little news was allowed to leak through with reference to the military situation, and that little was unsatisfactory.

M. Tokatlian, a Greek, owns the hotel, and I found myself at home at once. Everyone was most obliging; the terms were most reasonable; and the chef was acknowledged to be the best in the city. I wish to lay particular stress on the fact that the hotel is Greek, and that the attendants are nearly all of the same nationality. While I was there all sorts of rumours of atrocities committed by Mahomedans against Christians were circulated. The Tokatlian pursued the even tenor of its way, serving Mussulman, Christian, and Jew with equal impartiality. I saw nothing of the objectionable demonstrations which were freely reported in European journals—a fact which speaks volumes for the tolerance of the Turk.

My first visit was, of course, to the War Office, to obtain the required permission to proceed to the front. Some little formalities were necessary, including a letter from the Ambassador. In the case of an

Englishman this letter had to come from the Home Secretary, through the Embassy, testifying to the fact that he was a trustworthy and a *bonâ fide* correspondent. This was absolutely necessary, on account of the singular position which Turkey occupies in Europe. Unless the integrity of the war correspondents was guaranteed by their Governments, they might—I don't say they would—act as spies.

It must be borne in mind that Turkey occupied quite an isolated position among the European Powers, who had displayed an unmistakable desire to take advantage of the troubles and difficulties which were then overwhelming the Porte, and secure, if possible, either financial, diplomatic, or territorial benefit at the expense of the apparently declining Mussulman power.

Recent experience in regard to the tendency of German diplomacy, as well as that of other Powers that could be mentioned, has only to be taken into consideration to enable the reader to understand to some extent the reason why the Turks were taking such precautions to prevent the leakage of any information that would be useful to their opponents in the field.

It was necessary also for the Turkish authorities to take special precautions to prevent, if possible, any news being sent out of the country without the consent and approval of the Censor.

It should be made clear in this connection, that the postal arrangements in Turkey are unlike those of any other country. In addition to the General

Post Office, there are other post offices under the jurisdiction of other nationalities over which the Turkish authorities have no control.

With so many open doors at the disposal of unscrupulous people, it was perfectly natural that the War Office should insist upon correspondents being furnished with undoubted credentials and proofs of the genuine character of their duties and responsibilities.

This explanation will throw some light upon the ways in which certain unauthorised and unreliable reports were published in various countries for the obvious purpose of creating prejudice against the Turks, and also of influencing the people and the Governments in favour of the Allies.

It will not be altogether surprising, therefore, that Turkey, in such circumstances, should, like some other countries that could be mentioned, be entangled in red tape, or that attempts should have been made to render the conditions more stringent with the object, if possible, of effectually preventing the leakage of important information with reference either to the movements of troops or plans relating to the military position, fortifications, and organisation generally.

CHAPTER II

CORRESPONDENTS AND THE TURKISH WAR OFFICE

My visit to the War Office at Stamboul proved to be of a highly satisfactory character. My object was to obtain my licence or permit, to enable me to proceed to the front.

The position of affairs at this time was a somewhat delicate one. From what I and other war correspondents could ascertain, Adrianople was then being besieged, but no definite news was available as to whether it was entirely cut off from communication with the base at Constantinople.

It was known that a Bulgarian army was advancing from Mustafa Pasha, on the frontier, with the object of attacking and capturing Kirk Kilisse. There was a railway from Kirk Kilisse to Baba Eski, an important strategic railway junction, cutting the line which runs from Constantinople to Adrianople.

It was essential to the Turks that they should keep this line open for communications, and for the transport of troops, material, and commissariat. Unfortunately for the Porte, her trunk lines are only single ones, which of course increased her difficulties considerably, because it could not stand the heavy strain required at a time when the Allies were pushing forward so quickly.

The defending army was under the command of Abdullah Pasha, whose headquarters were then at Lüle Burgas. His troops were composed to a large extent of untrained redifs, or conscripts, who had been suddenly called upon to defend the frontiers of their country.

I can testify to the unfitness of these troops to take the field against a well-trained and thoroughly organised army of Bulgarians, for not only had I the opportunity of watching their arrival, but I saw proofs of their entire lack of military training, in the drills to which they had to be subjected, as well as their actual inability in the majority of cases to use the rifles with which they had been hastily armed.

It was not by any means an infrequent thing to see the sergeants explaining to these raw levies the use and manipulation of their weapons. Physically these men, as a rule, seemed to be well qualified to take the field, but obviously their utter lack of training and discipline raised grave doubts whether they would be able to uphold the reputation which the Turkish armies had hitherto so deservedly gained.

That the position generally with which the Turks were confronted was of a very serious character will be understood when it is pointed out that it was necessary to prepare not only against the Bulgarians, but also against the operations of the Servian army, which was advancing with great rapidity through Macedonia, while the Montenegrins were actively engaged in Albania, and making strenuous efforts to

capture Scutari. At the same time the Greeks were pouring across the mountain passes from Thessaly, their chief objective being, of course, Salonica.

To oppose this formidable combination of enemies Ali Riza Pasha, with an army of about 100,000 men, was operating in Macedonia. His line of communication by land was threatened by the Allies, and the fact that the Greeks had control of his communication by sea practically isolated him before the war was generally commenced.

After this necessary explanation with reference to the disposition of the opposing forces in the various fields of operation, I may refer to the results of my visit to the War Office.

It is a large and substantial block of buildings, beautifully situated in that portion of the city which overlooks the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus, and the distant mountains of Asia Minor, which could be seen silvered with the early frost and snows of winter. The approach to the War Office is by a huge archway into a large open space overlooked by balconies, and bisected by broad corridors communicating with the various offices of the department.

My intention was to see Nazim Pasha, the brilliant War Minister and Commander-in-Chief, who unfortunately was shot during the brief revolution which evicted Kiamil and his Cabinet from office, that *coup d'état* which so greatly surprised Europe and immensely complicated the settlement at which the

peace delegates at the London Conference were endeavouring to arrive.

As it was not possible to see Nazim Pasha on that occasion, I was introduced to Izzard Bey, a major on the headquarters staff, under whose charge the war correspondents and their affairs had been placed. This amiable gentleman gave me a brief résumé of the rules which had been drawn up for the guidance of the *correspondent de guerre*. Personally I found nothing unreasonable in them, but some of my confrères objected to the restrictions placed upon them.

Among the correspondents I was very pleased to meet at Constantinople were several of my old Tripoli friends. Mr. S. M. Bennett was there in the capacity of Press Censor, or rather to assist and advise the Turkish Censor on matters relating to the English correspondents. It was a thankless task, but one that he performed with the greatest tact and impartiality. I did not envy him his responsibility or that of the Turkish Censor, Major Washki Bey, for it always requires the exercise of considerable judgment and good temper.

There were many correspondents of different nationalities who patronised the Pera Palace Hotel, for the reason that much of the latest news found its way there from the front.

The hotel is rather pretentious in appearance than noted for its good cooking, and I preferred my simpler hostel with its generous and varied menu.

REDIFS DRILLING

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

There is a camaraderie among war correspondents in the field which enables them to be of mutual service to each other, and many were the interesting talks we had with reference to the progress of the war.

"This is going to be a record campaign as far as expenses go," said one of my colleagues, who was staying at the same hotel. "You must have quite a big outfit, including two saddle horses and enough pack animals to carry your camping outfit, as well as your servants and supplies of food for three months."

The horse question was a serious one. The War Office were commandeering horses right and left; even the tram horses were taken, while a permit was required to keep one horse in Constantinople.

The animals which had round their necks a wire with a small bead were indicated as "harem" (sacred), and could not be taken by the soldiers. Even strangers were sometimes put to the greatest inconvenience owing to the liability of their animals being seized by the war authorities. If this took place in some distant part of the city, the unhappy strangers would have to find their way back as best they could.

One lady friend of mine went to see the Sultan pass on his way to the mosque. The horses were claimed by the Government, notwithstanding her expostulation. Fortunately for her a Turkish officer, who understood English, came to the rescue, with

the result that the driver (a cabman) was granted leave to drive the lady to her hotel, but he was ordered to bring back the animals.

It is an ill wind that brings nobody any good, and in the circumstances it is scarcely surprising that attempts should have been made to take advantage of the urgent necessity for the correspondents to secure horses. They could not do without them, and they had to pay heavily for animals best fitted for the purpose. Consequently horse-flesh jumped up in price two hundred per cent., and it was an open secret that some of the officials "made hay while the sun shone."

While dealing with this question I may add that, notwithstanding the many complaints that were made from time to time during the campaign in connection with the General Post Office at Stamboul, it was, in my opinion, conducted as well as similar institutions in other capitals. I was assured by several business firms there that they utilised the Post Office to a large extent, and that their experience was that their letters were delivered through it quite as satisfactorily as through the foreign post offices in Constantinople. Speaking from personal experience, I can confirm their statements, and it is interesting, in this connection, to quote from the official reply made by the Ottoman Government to the Powers in regard to the negotiations for peace.

"The Porte believes that it is . . . indispen-

sable to abolish the foreign post offices existing in Turkey on conditions which it would be easy to determine, that would offer commerce all the necessary guarantees of celerity and security in postal matters."

It is my conviction that if this plan were adopted, it would not only be a fairer arrangement so far as correspondents are concerned, but it would result in general benefit in which the various foreign countries would participate, while the reading public would also be safeguarded against the issue of false and alarming reports.

I would here like to bear testimony to the camaraderie of representatives of foreign newspapers, and the facility with which they discharged their responsible duties under most restricted and difficult circumstances. They worked most amicably with the special correspondents representing the British Press, and their light-hearted natures considerably enlivened many depressing intervals of waiting during the campaign. The great advantages they possess in being good linguists enabled them to be of no little assistance to myself and others, and they rendered this service in a most ungrudging and generous manner. I have retained very pleasant memories of my association with them during the war, and I look forward with happy anticipations of renewing my acquaintance and friendship with them.

The common dangers and difficulties attendant upon the discharge of our duties cemented our rela-

tions, and will undoubtedly contribute to the growth of a better understanding among the people they represent.

Before leaving this branch of my subject it may be interesting to some of my readers to know the qualifications necessary in a war correspondent. Good health and strong nerves are most essential, while quick judgment is indispensable. It is a profession that gives one no time to think, or to correct mistakes or blunders. On receipt of orders to proceed to any part of the world, a correspondent must be prepared to start by the next train or boat; to take the straightest route to his destination; and to telegraph on arrival his address to the office of his newspaper. He must call without delay on the War Minister or Commander-in-Chief of the army to which he is to be attached, to present his credentials, to ask for a licence, or permit, and to follow the operations whilst awaiting instructions from the editor.

CHAPTER III

THE SOUL OF ISLAM

UNLIKE many other cities in the world, Constantinople did not disappoint me. It had been the dream of my life to see it, my imagination having been excited by the romantic history of this far-famed capital of Islam. I had visited most of the capitals of Europe, but Constantinople greatly impressed me, and aroused all my artistic enthusiasm. There is a constant mystery and glamour about it which has the effect upon you of exciting the imagination, while it intensifies the spiritual part of you as compared with the physical, and creates an indefinable yearning to understand some of its veiled mysteries.

When I stood on the shores of the clear and shining waters of the Bosphorus, with the minareted mosques piercing the sky, I was soothed by the musical calls of the boatmen and labourers as they cheerfully bore the burden and heat of the day. Undisturbed by the constant jar and noise of modern machinery, I felt that I could spend the rest of my life amid such enchanting surroundings.

It gave me almost the key to the little-understood mind of the Moslem, and enabled me to penetrate some of the mystery of the East. I had often

heard of the "call" of Asia, and I could appreciate it better than I had ever done before.

At first I could not understand the languorous ease of the people there, but in conversation with some of the principal residents, I was almost convinced that if I lived at Constantinople for a term of years, I should gradually and insensibly become infected with the spirit of it, and feel that I would not wish to exchange the peace and contentment engendered in such an atmosphere for the life of turmoil which represents the Western notions of civilisation.

From an artistic point of view, the shipping groups itself naturally into the harmony and composition of the picture, both as regards form and colour, and blends with the graceful lines and contours of the architectural background for which the city is so justly famed.

Looking across the Bosphorus towards Asia, enchanting views meet and satisfy the eye at every turn. The only discordant feature in the almost perfect scene is the German railway station on the Asiatic side, which with its hard, straight, rigid lines kills the spirit of the picture.

Seen under the effects of a gorgeous Eastern sunset, the city is transformed by the magic blend of colours into a fairyland of beauty and mystic attraction, which may account for the charm and fascination it has always had for the visitor to this greatly favoured land.

I was pleased to find an absence of mechanical noises and distractions, but it caused me quite a pang to see, in such primitive and natural surroundings, modern and practical methods of locomotion, which seemed to be quite out of harmony with the almost ancient atmosphere of the scene. There are horse tramways running leisurely and at long intervals through the streets, indicating the introduction of the more strenuous Western methods which are gradually penetrating the capital. There is also a somewhat objectionable underground railway, extending for a distance of about two miles from Galata to Pera, which by the way is extensively patronised by the more advanced and business-like portion of the population.

Speaking of the tramways, I should mention that that means of locomotion was stopped from the outbreak of the war, the Government having requisitioned all the horses. A feature of the tramcars is the arrangement made in them for women. The front part of the cars is usually screened off for them, and is regarded as "harem."

The continuous stream of redifs (conscripts) imparts a martial air to the streets, but there is an obvious lack of outward enthusiasm, including encouragement by the female element, which does so much to stimulate and inspire soldiers in other countries. The display of sentiment there is very slight, although I witnessed some pathetic scenes at family partings. As the regiments of soldiers pro-

ceed to the railway station they march to dirge-like music which, to European ears, is melancholy in the extreme, and is little calculated to raise their spirits. Underlying this veil of constraint, however, there is a deep enthusiasm for Islam and the Sultan, that makes the Turkish soldier such a formidable foe.

Constantinople is guarded and patrolled by the firemen. The brown and grey of their kharki, added to the uniforms of the soldiers, with the bright red helmet of antique pattern worn by the firemen, and the smart grey and silver tunic, and white astrakhan *kepi* of the police, present a picturesque harmony of colour in the streets.

Flocks of sheep and turkeys are driven to market through the crowded thoroughfares. Buffaloes creep steadily along drawing loads that might almost stop a traction engine; trains of packhorses, donkeys, and porters facilitate transportation.

All plod heavily along with back-breaking burdens. It is a picture of fourteenth-century life.

The telephone system is being introduced, but I was informed that some misunderstanding in the wording of the documents connected with the concession had temporarily stopped the work. It will, however, be completed in course of time.

With all the inconvenience, however, one would prefer to let matters rest as they are. It seems like vandalism to standardise the city to one drab reality.

Pera, the more residential portion of the city,

has many handsome modern buildings, and is laid out entirely on modern principles; and there, skulking behind a new terrace of buildings, stands a picturesque wooden house of old Constantinople in a state of semi-decay.

Down the hill towards the Galata bridge, a picturesque steep street with tortuous stairways leads up to the hill of Galata, crowned by the historic tower.

The new bridge would be a credit to any city in the world. It spans the Golden Horn, and a small toll is demanded for passing over to Stamboul. There is a pleasanter way by the ferry-boats. The charge is 30 para (threepence), but this can be shared by any number of passengers within the prescribed limit. It is well worth the experience to make the crossing by these comfortable ferry-boats, which are very gaily painted and rendered attractive by coloured cushions. A fine panorama of marine life presents itself to the eye. The numberless masts and sails of the ancient sailing ships contribute a most striking and agreeable foreground to Stamboul, with its hundred minarets and domes of beautiful mosques.

The railway station and depots are, of course, modern, but the approaches are a combination of squalor and filth. Rickety chairs fill the side-walks outside the dilapidated cafés, which line the road on either side. Unpromising as the cafés look, the coffee they provide is most excellent.

I purchased for my journey a number of requisites,

which are cheaper in the Stamboul bazaars than in the modern shops at Pera. The invariable Salim accompanied me "to make bazaar"—Salim's term for bargaining. I found the Turkish quilts to be the warmest and best for my bed; while waterproof sheets were absolutely indispensable, for obvious reasons. A small *tente d'abri* completed my outfit. Many of my confrères laid in supplies and tentage enough for half a dozen people, and, much to their sorrow, most of it had to be thrown away.

Calling at the Pera Hotel, on my way back to the Tokatlian, I met Sir Bryan Leighton, a great sportsman, who looks upon war as a pastime. He had just come out with a kinematograph apparatus, and an operator to work it. I paid daily visits to the War Office, and sketched Nazim Pasha and some of the staff at work in the bureau, a large airy room, the dominant note of colour in which was red. So unique was this room that a brief description of it may be of interest. It was entered through heavy portière curtains, and the necessary privacy was secured by means of a large screen. One's feet sank deeply into the thick pile of a rich Turkish carpet. There were no tables, with the exception of a writing-table at which Nazim Pasha sat. The ornamentation of the room was of a simple but luxurious character. Over the fireplace was a mantelpiece of pure white Parian marble, richly carved in exquisite designs. Above this was a large and handsome mirror. On the mantelpiece was a

heavily gilt ormolu clock, with corresponding ornaments of the same character. At each end stood a candelabra of curious pattern and workmanship.

Between the fireplace and the window stood the desk at which the famous General did his correspondence. It struck me that the Pasha worked very systematically, for there was no confusion of papers on the desk, and its general appearance seemed to give the key to Nazim's character.

I little then imagined that the shadow of the great tragedy which was to overtake the then Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces, would so soon add to the difficulty of settling the Eastern problem.

At the time I had the privilege and opportunity of interviewing him, he was giving orders in all directions. He paused at intervals to listen to the report of Moukbil Bey, the former military attaché at Sofia, who had just arrived. The appearance of this charming officer, who spoke English fairly well, and who I afterwards found to be a most interesting and entertaining companion, formed a strong contrast to that of Nazim Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief.

I rapidly sketched the General while I interviewed him for *The Illustrated London News*. He struck me as a very remarkable man. Built on heroic classic lines, he might in his early days have sat for the portrait of a Roman conqueror. In appearance and manner he was fifty years old, but he was really beyond that age; large and dignified in his military greatcoat, he seemed colossal, with head set

well on broad, evenly-balanced, well-shaped shoulders. He had the look and gesture of one born to command.

The face might justly be called grand. In earlier days he must have been handsome. From beneath the rich sable fur of his *kepi*, his eyes, blue-grey in colour, looked at me steadily, almost sternly. Perhaps the stern expression was not altogether natural, for the radiating lines of the eyes altered their appearance and generally softened their effect. These were indications of the *bon camaraderie* of which he was capable when he chose. His nose was dominant, but well-shaped; his brown moustache, slightly touched with iron-grey, did not conceal a firm, determined mouth, and a strongly-built square jaw, which gave him a somewhat aggressive appearance. He spoke French fluently, with all the gestures and manners of a Frenchman.

He was very gracious to me, taking great interest in my artistic work from time to time. Amid the responsibilities of his important office I left him, agreeably impressed by his personality, and fully able to apply to him the description given by Prince Bismarck: "The Turk is the finest gentleman in Europe."

NAZIM PASHA

A Sketch from life by the Author

CHAPTER IV

OFF TO THE FRONT

At the close of my memorable interview with Nazim Pasha, which will long remain in my memory, owing to his unfortunate "accident," the General introduced me to Izzad Bey, and in the course of a conversation I had with him, he told me in confidence that all the war correspondents would be allowed to go to Kirk Kilisse in a day or two.

Izzad Bey is a generous open-hearted man, whose real disposition often struggles with his dignity; he has sometimes to give way to the official manner. I cannot speak too highly of the consideration shown by him to the members of the Fourth Estate.

Knowing as they did that correspondents would reveal the true state of affairs at the front, the Turkish officials displayed a patience and good temper which did them credit under such difficult circumstances. It must have been trying to them to have to answer so many direct questions of the correspondents, but they succeeded in imparting such items of information as were at their disposal. They thus prevented the hungry Press representatives from raging too furiously. They softened the disappointment of the correspondents in a very tactful

way, and I doubt whether the Censors of any other army would have emerged more satisfactorily from the ordeal.

Compared with the experience of our colleagues who were attached to the armies of the Allies, we who were with the Turks were treated handsomely, if not generously. At the time we did not realise that the campaign was progressing so unsatisfactorily for the Turks, but we afterwards discovered that they were on the losing side.

At last the day we had been so anxiously awaiting arrived. A train was placed at the service of a number of the correspondents, whose baggage practically filled it. There was not room for all of them. The start was to have been made in the dim hours of the early morning.

At four o'clock the same afternoon the train was still at the platform. The first contingent did at last get off, and with the exception of a railway accident, which caused a delay of a day, they reached Tchorlu. Their original destination was Baba Eski. As the world knows now there were very particular reasons why this plan was not followed. Rumours flew round that the Turks had won a big battle at Kirk Kilisse, and that the Bulgarians were put to flight. The question they asked themselves was—was Adrianople invested? The very air was thick with mystery. Bit by bit the news leaked out; there had been hand-to-hand fighting at Kirk Kilisse, the Turks had been beaten, and Baba Eski was

already in the hands of the Bulgarians, whilst Adrianople had sent its last message to the outer world.

Everywhere we heard the same sad story, that Turkish armies were being defeated. The news affected neither the spirits nor the faith of the Turks, that finally victory would crown their efforts.

These disasters were not due to want of valour or determination on the part of the Turks, but were simply and solely due to a lack of organisation and an apparent total disregard of the simplest principles of modern warfare.

There is much to be said in palliation of the Turkish *debâcle*, for the country is divided in opinion in regard to the new régime. The new Parliament, which was going to work such wonders, brought about the neglect of every vital principle. It was essential that the army should be run on new lines. The Old Guard, as one might describe the ancient veteran officers, were discharged to make room for the good-looking, smartly-dressed academy soldiers; who were of good material, but lacking altogether in the necessary experience.

The navy was being utterly neglected. Indeed, the safety of the nation demanded that its strength should be greatly increased. The administration was in a state of demoralisation. There were, to use a metaphor, half a dozen Irelands clamouring for Home Rule or separation. All these different elements were being stirred up and taken advantage

of by the ambitious greed and lust of conquest of powerful neighbours.

The question was, what could Turkey do in such circumstances? What could any country do? I was there during this cataclysm of woe. I saw nothing unworthy in the behaviour of the population or of the officials.

The Balkan war has been skilfully and shamefully engineered throughout by interested nations. But these machinations will yet prove ineffective if the Turks are found to be capable of adopting Western methods of improvement and reform. It is not too late even now to retrieve recent mistakes, and perhaps the bitter lesson they have gained may yet prove to be a blessing in disguise.

Whom is she to trust? The past she cannot undo. But what of the future? The loss of all her fair lands will follow if she cannot or will not collect her energies and bring about the necessary reorganisation. Her children have outgrown discipline, and have been working on opposing lines. Why should Turkey not enter into partnership with these young virile States, and by this means save the remnant of their country in Europe and prevent altogether any inroads upon her Asiatic territory?

CHAPTER V

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EASTERN PROBLEM

In view of recent exciting developments in the Near East, Turkey has become the cynosure of all eyes. Those who have followed the course of international diplomacy and the concatenation of striking events, cannot fail to have noted the fact that the Turkish dominions have been regarded by some of the Powers as a sort of Naboth's vineyard.

While referring to her unhappy and extremely difficult position as a declining Power in Europe, it is almost impossible to ignore the fact that our own country is vitally and practically interested in the solution of the existing problems in the Near East. For many years Britain's influence was predominant with the Sublime Porte, but we have unfortunately allowed other Powers to deprive us largely of this advantage, which was so essential to us in view of the fact that His Majesty has undoubtedly a larger number of Mahomedan subjects in India and Egypt and other parts of the Empire than can be found in any country except in Turkey.

My own personal experience has enabled me to realise, more perhaps than many people who stay at home, the great importance of maintaining our influence in the Moslem world. I fully appreciate

and recognise the delicacy and difficulties of the existing situation, but my firm conviction is that England ought not to allow any other Power to secure a controlling influence in Mahomedan affairs. I would go so far as to say that, although the position of Turkey at the present time may seem to be somewhat depressing, there is in the nation an inherent power of recuperation which, if properly utilised and directed, should enable her to still act as the "buffer of Europe."

One of the facts which cannot be ignored, is that British interests in Turkey and in the Near East are greater than those of any other Power. Not only financially, but politically, religiously and strategically, it is absolutely certain that any mistaken policy on our part would create great barriers to our Imperial progress and position as an all-world Power.

In times past the dangers of an invasion of India have often cast a gloom upon the people of this country. Russia was then regarded as our greatest rival, and it was generally supposed that she had very ambitious designs in regard to our Indian possessions. The situation has now somewhat changed, but the fact remains that Turkey is on the highroad to India, and that the old danger is largely accentuated by the increased power of Germany. Her manifest intention, with her augmented navy, to become a controlling influence, not only in Turkey itself, but in the affairs of the East

generally, renders it absolutely imperative that we should take such precautions to maintain our position and influence there as the development of affairs demand.

We have, of course, with our extensive dominions, upon which the sun never sets, no desire to acquire further territory, but, at the same time, we cannot blind ourselves to the obvious intentions of some of our rivals to diminish our prestige in world politics, especially in the East. There is, I am afraid, some danger of allowing the concentration of our fleets in the North Sea to divert our attention from the weakness of our position in the Mediterranean.

Recent developments in the Near East should convince any student of the international position of the necessity of maintaining our naval power in those waters at such strength as will enable us to meet emergencies and complications which can scarcely fail to ensue if it is found that too great attention is being paid to the North Sea and too little to our highway to India.

I admit that the existing position of affairs, so far as the Near East is concerned, is a very delicate one, and that the future diplomacy of the British Government must be shaped largely by the latest events. From my own personal experiences during the recent campaign, my conviction has been strengthened that it would be in the best interests of this country if some means could be devised of assisting Turkey, diplomatically or otherwise, without

seriously offending the susceptibilities of Europe, to emerge from the crisis. It would be a fatal mistake to allow any other Power to become the dominating influence in that part of the world.

Europe has set the pace of naval expansion and development, and the Western nations have realised this much more fully than Turkey.

The recent wars in which Turkey has been engaged have provided object lessons and convincing proofs of the great extent to which she has been handicapped by her lack of ships. Had her naval power been greater when her war with Italy in regard to Tripoli was commenced, she would probably not now have been in such a humiliated position.

Then again, in her struggle with Greece and the Balkan Allies, she has been practically defenceless on the seas. Her comparatively small navy, inadequately manned and armed, has not hitherto been able to play a great part even against the Greek fleet.

The loss of some of the islands in the Ægean Sea contributed greatly to the immense difficulties of defending the Dardanelles, as well as of protecting the lines of communication during the war.

The moral of the whole situation is that Turkey must in the near future greatly strengthen her naval position, or her latter end may be a bad one.

CHAPTER VI

THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION

A BRILLIANT sun gleamed on the dancing waters of the Bosphorus as we steamed through the shadows of Stamboul's ancient and battlemented walls.

"Why don't they repair and fortify them?" exclaimed Bennett. "They could hold their own even now against modern guns."

Constantinople proper is surrounded by walls, the Theodosian walls on the land side forming a triple circumvallation. Time has dealt gently with the lofty battlements; although the fig and other hardy trees and climbing plants are now feeding on some of the decayed and crumbling fortifications.

As we passed the site of Stamboul's ancient water cisterns, Bennett related stories of the old Greek wars, in which the terrible Greek fire was first used.

The market gardens, which supply the city with vegetables and fruit, are left behind, and we stop at San Stephano, of historic fame. How many treaties have been signed within its precincts!

The afternoon slowly wore on, and the strong light threw every object into bold relief. At Haden Kella the train halted for a brief space, giving us an

opportunity of studying the famous Tchatalja lines, designed by the late Baker Pasha. Even without its formidable redoubts, the terrain itself looked unassailable. A deep valley, watered by the river and a wide shallow lake, defies the approach of a foe from that direction. The one and only road runs by way of a long narrow bridge which connects the mainland with the village of Biyuk Checkmedge; as a further protection this bridge is mined.

The centre of the position is a hard nut to crack. Its rising hills provide an ideal situation for artillery, and for digging rifle trenches. It is across the low-lying plain, between these heights and the hills opposite, that any attacking enemy must perforce advance under a murderous fire from guns and rifles. At the Derekoi end of the line shallow lagoons and morasses protect the right flank of the Ottoman defences. But Tchatalja's flanks do not depend entirely on trenches and fortresses. The guns of the battleships, which have a range of five miles inland, guard the sea ends of the lines with their wide-sweeping fire. A network of barbed wire creates still further obstacles to the attack, rendering these famous lines practically impervious.

Tchatalja, the village which gives its name to these fortifications, lies a few miles farther along the line to the north-west. The railway follows the devious windings of the valley, through which meanders an insignificant brook which falls into the

lake, a valuable feature in the natural scheme of defence.

As we crawled along at the rate of about five miles an hour, our progress was impeded by long halts on the sidings to allow returning trains, filled with sick and wounded, to pass by on their way to the hospitals at Stamboul.

We saw heavy reinforcements marching along the road, which, like the railways, follows the course of the depressions. By the time night fell we composed ourselves for a rest as best we could, our supper consisting of sardines, bread, and a bottle of excellent Roumanian red wine.

We made very little progress during the night, halting at frequent intervals. The train stopped for a very long time in a deep cutting, which gave us an opportunity, not only of stretching our limbs—a greatly needed relief after our nine hours' journey in rather cramped quarters—but at the same time of watching the use of some search-lights in the direction of Kirk Kilisse.

The dark landscape shaded away into the dim starlight. The only sign of life was the figure of the watchful sentinel. Nothing else was to be seen but the orange glow of the train lights in the deep cutting below, and wreaths of steam from the hissing engine.

The following afternoon we steamed into the bustle of Tcherkesh Keui station. The advanced base is an important place. There was a military

post there in normal times, and the barracks and quarters might accommodate a company of infantry. Like other railway stations, it was strongly guarded, this railway being our only means of transport at this period of the year, when the roads are at times impassable on account of the deep clinging nature of the black clay soil.

Piles of boxes, bales, and bags of corn, as well as equipment for military requirements of all kinds, covered every available space in and outside the station. Even the metals in some cases were hidden by heaps of gear which were being conveyed by soldiers to the side of the station.

The water supply was obtained from the only well, worked by means of a pump, the handle of which was missing. A group of thirsty soldiers pressed round to get a drink from the well, and that water was worth something if judged by the amount of labour required to secure it, for the men had to balance themselves on the top of the pump and pull at the sucker, which only gave them a few drops of the precious fluid.

The watering took a very long time, and probably had been going on all day, for the process was slow and exhausting. But these petty hardships were accepted with true Turkish indifference. No one was responsible for the working of the pump, so "what did it matter?" This was a phrase which satisfied everyone.

Thousands of tons of charcoal were lying about.

Iron bars were in abundance, and smiths' forges were also there when needed. The officers in charge of this base took things in their usual casual manner.

Noticing the word "Restaurant" over a door, visions of hot coffee at the very least floated through my mind, but the idea was very soon dispelled. Instead of eatables, the counters were piled with weapons—rifles, bayonets, swords, &c. Two officers were in charge. One of them was examining a very ancient sabre, while the other was busy serving out rifles to eager applicants. In reply to inquiries for information as to the state of affairs at the front, the only response was "There is none."

The headquarter staff were camped on the left-hand side of the station. They had apparently only just arrived, for the place was in a most bewildering condition. The aristocratic motor cars and the lowly bullock waggons were garaged side by side in a welter of muck.

The General's tent flew his banner, which was fastened indifferently to either motor-car or waggon. I scrutinised the auto-cars in the hope of recognising my fellow-journalists' machine. As they were not there I concluded that they had proceeded to Tchorlu.

There were signs of urgent business in the number of gallopers who were coming and going. I endeavoured to interview some of the members of the staff, but they were far too busy with other important matters to attend to my request for news.

Those emblems of peace and goodwill amongst men, the banners of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, floated amicably side by side over the crowded hospital marquees, whose wounded inmates were having a very bad time, suffering from the heat during the day, while at night they were almost frozen by the chill winds of Thrace uplands.

The most remarkable feature in the hospital tents was the wonderful patience and endurance of the Turks in spite of excruciating sufferings. One cannot fail to admire it, for they seldom or never complained or uttered a groan whilst the doctors were at work probing and cutting. There was an abundance of medical stores and anæsthetics, but many of the poor soldiers seemed actually to prefer the operation to be carried out without the administration of opiates, which they regarded as a waste of time.

The deadly typhoid claimed its victims in hundreds, the camp being infected with germs. The bacillus of the deadly cholera had germinated and dispersed its poisoned messengers over the country. The patients had to remain in these crowded evil-smelling tents until they could be forwarded to the hospitals at San Stephano. They were squatting or lying about patiently, and all looked hungry. Those that could walk dragged their fever-stricken bones along the long weary road, while others in worse case rode on pack-horses. The pack saddle, even to a strong healthy man, is an instrument of

torture. All the hard angles grind away at the most sensitive part of the anatomy, like so many tourniquets, arrest the flow of blood and benumb the feet and legs.

Izzad Bey did his level best to make things comfortable for us, but we stopped so long at this station that I began to fear we were never going ahead. It was not until after midday that the cheerful call brought us like boys from our occupation. We settled in our places, very thankful for the attention shown to us by the Turks.

There was a good deal of talking and chuckling as we waved our hands to the soldiers and refugees, who were beginning to arrive largely in excess of the accommodation. There were buffalo waggons piled with household effects, and women and children in scores, sheltered by an awning of straw matting. The unwieldy, uncomfortable country vehicles crawled along amid the bitter cries and groans of the unoiled wheels, which had the appearance of being built of cardboard. They wobbled very much, and every moment one expected to see a collapse, but it was wonderful how they lasted until the end of a journey, tied up as they were with pieces of string, and fixed with bits of stick; the pace was snail-like, but there was never a stop. This is one of the advantages of pack or buffalo travel. Once started, nothing stops them until the drivers call a halt or until they drop. A wailing sound like "Ah-h-h!" the preliminary to a jackal's howl, long-drawn and dismal, encourages

them along. I studied this call, which stood me in good stead later.

The small station was mostly built with wooden roofs, red-tiled, and there was a good-sized compound or garden, well cultivated, in which the stationmaster worked during his leisure.

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Turkish Captain "Hassan"
reconnoitering the Italian
Battleships. Supping Night
with the Ottomans in Tripoli

CHAPTER VII

THE BOOM OF THE GUNS

On the breeze was borne a faint booming sound that all recognised. It was the artillery at work on both sides. The battle of Lüle Burgas had begun.

We had just arrived at some insignificant station when we heard these portents. Along the horizon in the same direction the smoke of burning villages sullied the purity of the perfect sky.

Attachés and correspondents stood in groups in friendly discussion, arguing and wondering as to the exact direction or position of the guns. Nothing could be seen of the battle, which was raging fiercely some thirty miles to the north. I took notes and made some sketches; and as the attachés and correspondents grouped themselves naturally and picturesquely, many field-glasses were directed at nothing in particular.

We steamed on to Tchorlu station, which lies in a hollow or dip in the plain, as the reverberating reports were accompanied by a faint crackling as of green leaves on a fire.

Izzad Bey informed me that some correspondents were in the town of Tchorlu, about two miles off. We could see the tall minarets and windmills showing up over the crest of the hilly ridges which bounded

the valley. It was another splendid position for defence which had been quite neglected.

The authorities here were undecided as to my movements. I would have liked to have remained with the train. It would have been war correspondence in luxury; a comfortable bed at night and proper food, with horses to ride to various points of interest.

Bennett had made some sort of an arrangement for me to stop with him to share the compartment, and to follow up the operations in company with the attachés. Some of the latter gentlemen, however, objected to be kept under surveillance. So the plan fell through, to the keen disappointment of both Bennett and myself.

There was confusion worse confounded here, if possible. The small area of the yard was crammed with refugees; carriages, waggons, and baggage were dumped out on the metals, anywhere and everywhere. The engine was wanted immediately.

The attachés were in no better plight than ourselves. I had asked the English attaché earlier in the day to share our dinner, hoping to give him roast fowls. Salim had got the birds, but there was no fire or time to cook them. They were tied in bundles, and spread over the baggage. What their ultimate fate was I never heard, for I did not see them again.

Meantime the task of sorting out baggage and getting transport to the town was a rather difficult

one. It appeared that everything on wheels was engaged by the military. Those vehicles that could be hired at exorbitant rates were either broken down, or the animals were so enfeebled with continuous work that they were useless.

The servants in the presence of this turmoil simply lost their heads, and stood dumbly smiling, apparently not understanding what was being said to them. The officers, smiling and polite, were shouting contrary orders, which did not tend to straighten out matters. Some of them were as helpless as women. But this was largely the result of their kindness of heart, and of their disinclination to hurt anyone's feelings. The "gentleman" came well through it all.

Several trains were standing, loaded with munitions of war. I had retired for a brief spell, after carrying kit bags, chairs, and tents, and shouting at servants, to the window of my apartment. I looked out on a confused camp—the usual tangle of tents, pack-horses, sick, dying, and dead.

The valley was wide, but perhaps for the sake of the picturesque all these objects were jumbled together, with waggons threading the maze with wonderful accuracy. There always seemed to be room for one more. There were the usual refugees, whose men folk, wondrous wise, sat or reclined smoking, and giving general directions. These men were paid to help to get things shipshape.

The river was spanned by an ancient Turkish

bridge, which just admitted one vehicle at a time. On the further side of the bridge was a constantly accumulating block, fed by a long chain of carts from the main road, going northwards—an endless stream of fugitives going towards Tchorlu. I asked a German correspondent to direct his glass towards this human flood. It looked like a retreat, but he assured me it was nothing of the kind. It consisted of waggons full of wounded, and empty waggons returning for supplies for the front.

I found Salim had at last made some arrangements for the transport of the baggage, and bestriding my pony we started for the town of Tchorlu. By this time the evening shadows had fallen in long streaks across the road.

There was a confusion of traffic to and from the station; horsemen were dashing here and there, and everything betokened that some important movement was on foot.

The town of Tchorlu is built on the top of a rolling ridge. The white chalk roads and tracks reminded me somewhat of the downs at Brighton. We entered by a sort of toll-gate, which was occupied by a picket of cavalry; and a conspicuous landmark was the tall minaret of the mosque on our right. Gradually the straggling houses snuggled together, and we soon became involved in an apparently endless maze of small narrow streets.

Threading our way through one of the streets, we came to the square, from which radiated more crooked

streets. The square itself was literally packed with humanity, and animals standing knee-deep in filth and muck. Pickets threaded their way through the garbage and refuse of a population of thousands of refugees. Originally the square had been rudely paved, but now the road was covered with pools of water and mud.

There were a few dealers, principally Jews, trying to do some sort of trade. The buyers were mostly eager and hungry; everybody wanted bread, but they could not get it for love or money, although ordinary merchandise could be had for the taking. Many of the shops were completely gutted, the original owners having carried away as much of their stock as they could conveniently cope with, leaving the rest to take care of itself.

The doors and windows of the shops were wide open; but even their standing invitation to enter was not generally taken advantage of, for the very simple reason that there was no means of getting the plunder out of the town.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PANIC

LEAVING behind us this almost indescribable scene of confusion and filth, we plunged through a narrow lane, densely packed with people and vehicles of every kind, until we reached the headquarters, where Vashki Bey, the Press Censor, was established to advise and assist us if required. I found him in a state of some excitement and anxiety; his brood of correspondents had scattered. He told me that some of the English correspondents were lost, and he was afraid they had been killed. This made me rather concerned as to the fate of my personal friends.

Vashki Bey very kindly billeted me in the house of a Turk, in company with Long, an American correspondent, who represented, as he carelessly put it, a string of newspapers from N'York to San Fran-ces-co. I found him a very agreeable companion. The house, like all Turkish dwellings, was scrupulously clean. The ground floor, hall, and kitchen were combined; the cooking was done over a brazier, and ablutions were performed at the common tap.

A flight of stairs led us to our floor, which comprised three rooms, lightly partitioned, and destitute of either picture or ornament. A broad well-cushioned divan stretched from one wall to the other. The

windows provided a general view of the street. The upper storey projected over the lower one, reminding me of descriptions of the London of King Charles's time. The back windows overlooked the mosque standing in a cemetery.

On the following day I rode out towards Lüle Burgas, guided by the sound of heavy firing. I passed a portion of the Turkish army in full retreat. It was an orderly retreat compared with those which I had witnessed in previous campaigns in other parts of the world.

As evening fell I came to a bridge crossing the Ergene, which was crowded with refugees and soldiers. Here the officers were endeavouring to arrest the retreat by beating back the soldiers with the flat of their sabres; their object perhaps was more to relieve the pressure on the narrow bridge than to stop the panic.

A great amount of confusion was naturally caused by the concentration of such crowds at this narrow point, and it soon resulted in a species of pandemonium.

In the more open space beyond the bridge were the country people with their horses, carts, and waggons, apparently bent on reaching places of safety, and hampering the soldiers.

It was a heart-rending spectacle. Strong men crying from utter weariness; women and children struggling through the deep clinging mire; waggons hopelessly entangled or completely wrecked, added

to the hopeless confusion and attempt to escape. This mass of humanity moved without order or discipline towards the line of least resistance. Some refugees vainly attempted to stem the torrent to regain a more hopeful track.

The road was now a veritable slough of despond, only distinguishable from the black oozy fields on either side.

An extraordinary combination of sounds was created by the plunge of thousands of feet in the clammy clinging morass in which some fell to rise no more. Pressed onward by the ever-gathering crowds from abandoned villages and farms, men, women and children presented the appearance of panting, stricken beasts, with wolfish and blood-shot eyes—they had almost lost the semblance of humanity.

I was greatly impressed by the stoical patience displayed by some of the refugees. A sharp cry of pain occasionally penetrated the sobbing gasps of people in torment, tired to death yet kept mechanically moving, and urged ever onwards by the press from behind.

I saw one soldier supported by two comrades on either side, who did not discover until afterwards that they had been carrying a corpse. Hastily excavating a grave by the wayside they placed him therein and resumed their flight.

It is impossible to give more than a slight idea of the awful scenes witnessed on this retreat. A

redeeming feature in it was the entire absence of mutiny or violence.

Mahomedan and Christian were knit together in the common bond of suffering. At least a third of the crowd were Christians. The way in which members of one creed helped the other contradicts to some extent the theory that it is impossible for people of two religions to live together in harmony.

The soldiers of Asia apparently did not resent the Christian refugees of Thrace sharing their troubles and lightening each other's burdens where it was possible to do so. Wearied children slept peacefully in the arms of rough soldiers. A half-dead corporal found a temporary resting-place in a farmer's buffalo waggon.

On that terrible march there were many good Samaritan soldiers assisting the old and helpless. I pitied the women more than the men, for the majority of them were unveiled, which added humiliation and shame to the torture of their terrible flight.

Refugees were stimulated by the roar of artillery to extra exertions, only to fall exhausted in the mire.

Had it not been for the heavy rains the insignificant streams, several of which had to be crossed, could have been easily forded. Now the waters roared like a mountain torrent and surged against the bridge, which acted like a dam, flooding the country for miles on either side.

I marvelled that the frail bridge stood against the flood. As the human torrent flowed onward I

watched a horse and rider struggling in the water, while attempting to cross to the other side. Nothing could prevail against such a flood.

Carried away by the crowd of refugees it was some little time before I succeeded in extricating myself and returning to Tchorlu. I arrived there wet and wearied, only too glad to rest.

All that night a ceaseless stream of fugitives poured into the town. Every house was filled to overflowing, and the streets and square were crowded with soaking people.

The morning brought no relief. The rain came down like a deluge, blown by a hurricane of wind, whirling about flocks of scolding jackdaws.

The Bulgarians were expected to follow on the heels of the Turkish army, and we looked for their arrival every moment. Neither friend nor foe would willingly have faced the havoc of such a storm, otherwise the correspondents as well as the fugitives might have been captured by the victors without much difficulty.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

A HOPELESS day succeeded an anxious night. There were many sad-eyed, weary watchers. Mothers comforted babies in the soaked and shivering crowds, who were compelled to camp where they stood in the street.

Among them all no one cursed the rain, for it comes from God. Whatever the present sufferings, it must be good. Inshallah!

The distant goal was far away across the Golden Horn, sunny lands in the beyond, where no plundering, pillaging Europe would ever come to rob them of their lands and their God, if that were possible.

All day, and every day, the sorrowing, heavily-laden multitudes crawled in bitter travail, but never in despair.

Considering that the number of persons of different creeds and nationalities—Christian and Mahomedan—toiled and suffered side by side, such misery might naturally have brought evil passions to the surface. Human nature was stripped bare and exposed.

What do we see amongst these Turks but charity and submission to the will of Allah!

I and Long, the American correspondent, prepared a breakfast from our stores. We had no bread, but we had plenty of biscuits. Everything was damp and uncomfortable—the sort of a morning on which a cheerful fire is absolutely necessary. We missed the comfort and cosiness of our English homes, but it is the lot of the war correspondent to meet and overcome difficulties and discomforts while campaigning.

The charcoal brazier converted the chill atmosphere of our room into a warm Scotch mist.

We received most alarming bulletins, and had they been true, I should probably not have had the opportunity of writing this book. But on this occasion, as on many others, most of them were fabrications, and it was necessary to digest them with a large grain of salt and to discount them considerably.

The wind whirled the dead leaves, and the tempest lashed the windows. There was not a break in the universal blackness of the sky.

I wrapped myself in oilskins, and started for Vashki Bey. He and his staff were not in their quarters, but I found Salim, who had just emerged from a doorway with a formidable key in his hand.

Sir Bryan Leighton and Ashmead-Bartlett were in the town. They had arrived nearly exhausted from Lüle Burgas, where they had been in the thick of the fighting in the early hours of the morning.

Salim had been feeding the horses and locking

them up to keep them safe. There were, of course, a great number of residents of the town who would have "borrowed" your horse and thought no great harm of it. It was not the soldiers and the refugees we had to guard against in this respect, but the townsmen, who preferred to ride rather than walk if they could obtain a mount for nothing. It was owing to the precautions taken that none of the horses were actually stolen in Tchorlu.

While Leighton was at breakfast he told his experiences on the battlefield. They were somewhat similar to my own, but he had the good fortune to see more of the actual fighting than I had.

He succeeded in getting to the village of Karistan, the headquarters of Abdullah Pasha, who, by the way, had not had any food for twenty-four hours. Sir Bryan, who is an excellent cook, provided the General with a substantial meal. This will illustrate the fact that the sufferings of hunger were not only borne by the men, but also by the officers, including the Commander-in-Chief.

It is one of the merits of the Turkish officers that in times of need they will give to others and cheerfully go without themselves—their hospitality is unbounded. Under such conditions as those I have described, such a self-sacrificing action becomes a virtue.

The General who suffers with his men is worthy of the highest encomiums. The fine behaviour of all the officers in this most trying circumstance

established them as being without fear and without reproach.

Their good qualities as well as their bad ones are inherited, and they have been unchanged for generations. Nations can only evolve and develop slowly, and the Turks have had no chance. Their generous faith and belief in the good in human nature has helped to bring about the present state of affairs. In the circle in which this campaign was conducted, descriptions of the fighting are bound to be limited, owing to the extent of the fighting line and the range of modern guns: both sides blaze away seemingly at nothing. The Turkish artillery (Krupps) was always outranged by the enemy's guns (Creusots).

Had it been possible to feed the soldiers, the campaign might have ended better for the Turks. But the best soldiers must eat. I attribute the whole of their misfortunes to the break-down of the commissariat.

The panic has been described in certain quarters as incomprehensible. To me it seems quite natural that famished soldiers, holding the lines at Kirk Kilisse and at Lüle Burgas, should be unable to bear the hunger strain any longer. They returned to the camps in search of food, thus creating the general impression, to both friends and foe, that they were retreating. It was another illustration of the fact that an army fights on its stomach.

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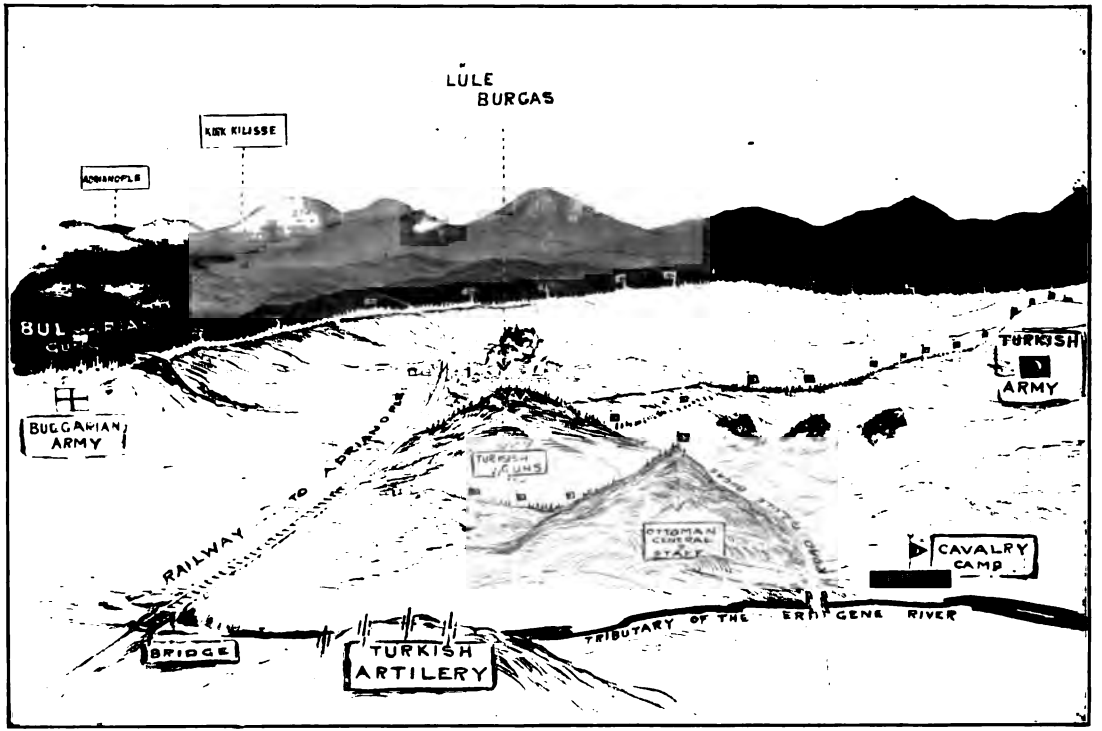
LÜLE
BURGAS
KIRK KILISSE
ADRIANOPLE
BULGARIAN
ARMY
TURKISH
ARMY
RAILWAY TO ADRIANOPLE
TURKISH GUNS
OTTOMAN CENTRAL STAFF
CAVALRY CAMP
BRIDGE
TURKISH
ARTILERY
TRIBUTARY OF THE ERTYGENE RIVER

LÜLE BURGAS

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF LÜLE BURGAS

I WADED through mire and water to the Bureau of Vashki Bey. I found him and his staff in a terribly worried state, for the reason that several of the correspondents were still missing.

The German and Austrian journalists were there, adding to his troubles by arguing about the wording of their telegrams. My interview was short. I showed him my drawings for the *Illustrated London News*, which he passed without comment.

To send the letter by mail was the next difficulty. The postmaster of Tchorlu had departed a long time previously for Stamboul. However, Vashki Bey promised he would see that it was sent off. Thereupon I handed the red envelope, in which were enclosed at least a dozen of my sketches for the *Illustrated London News*, to one of his aides-de-camp —not however without some slight misgivings on my part, which afterwards proved to be well founded.

Everything was then in such a state of chaos and confusion that I do not blame the Turkish officials for their loss. I afterwards learned, to my great regret, that the sketches never reached their destination. Having made the necessary arrangements for my mail, I paid a visit to some of my confrères who lodged

over the shop of Demetrius, a Greek butcher—the only butcher left in the town. He had nothing to fear from the Bulgarians because of his nationality and sympathies, which were entirely with the Allies.

Nearly all the business in the Turkish towns was done by either Armenians or Greeks, and when the Bulgarians advanced and took these towns the Greeks and Armenians were unmolested. This accounted for the composure of so many of the townspeople.

After much fruitless wandering I at last found the house with the blue door for which I was seeking, opposite the only café which had not been deserted. The door was barred and bolted, but after much furious knocking some one condescended to open it.

The ostler's room was entered by a flimsy door hanging by one hinge. It was dimly lighted by two low windows. The divan, as is usual in Turkish rooms, filled up the space under the windows, reaching from one side of the room to the other. It looked cosy, and under different circumstances it might have been very comfortable. But now tiny rivulets of water poured in through the broken windows, saturating both couch and cushions.

After a warm and noisy welcome, I selected the driest part of the divan to sit upon. In the middle of the room stood a round table littered with evidences of the craft—papers, ink-bottles, string, &c.

A group of guests leaned over this rickety piece of furniture, consulting the map of Thrace. A litter

of saddlery, sleeping gear, and camp-beds, together with cooking utensils and a store box covered all the available space. On the walls hung accoutrements, revolvers, and equipment.

When I entered the room a heated argument was going on with regard to recent events and the topography of the country. Alan Ostler, of the *Daily Express*, like Napoleon, was demonstrating how to solve some difficult problem, meekly listened to by Pilcher of the *Morning Post* and another correspondent, while Ward Price of the *Daily Mail* stood slightly in the background studying this interesting group.

Price wears a monocle, which effectually screens his thoughts—no doubt at the moment he was evolving some plan for circumventing circumstances and making a coup, which actually came off later. The arrival of the tea interval turned the conversation to the difficult question of how to save their impedimenta. Of transport there was none, excepting the worn-out packhorses, which were now almost worth their weight in silver. Very few of them could be got even at that exorbitant price.

I was offered heaps of stores at about 100 per cent. discount. For instance, a case of brandy containing one dozen bottles sold for ten shillings. Heavy stores were a drug in the market.

The supposed rate of the Bulgarian advance left no time to make proper arrangements for their transportation. All we could do was to make good use of

the delicacies for tea. We had *pâté de foie gras* and Stilton cheese, jam, marmalade, potted shrimps with every kind of biscuit, and a plum-pudding which had been bought for use at Christmas. The meal was washed down with tea and old cognac.

Angus Hamilton of the Central News invited me to a farewell dinner to help to dispose of some of his luxuries.

Returning to my own quarters, soaked to the skin by the incessant rain, my landlord (*pro tem.*) made me a brew of excellent coffee. At seven o'clock, with the assistance of a guide and a lantern, I started to find Hamilton's place, a much more difficult problem than in the daytime. I eventually found the right house after stumbling about alleys, and, the door being open, I blundered into a very dark passage. My guide steered me up a tortuous staircase that suddenly brought me into the general living apartment, which with its deep rich brown tones would have provided Teniers with fascinating interior subjects. The room was filled with a motley crowd of the special correspondents of the London journals. They were busily engaged in various ways, some of them cooking or washing; others were writing by the dim uncertain light of several candles, fixed to various pieces of furniture and provision boxes by the simple process of melting one end and letting the grease stick.

A dimly lighted lamp hung low, suspended from the smoke-blackened beams, which threw a rich

mellow light over the scene. My host stepped forward to greet me. The light of the lamp, as he stood in front of it, framed his shapely head in a nimbus of soft rays, somewhat reminding me of a picture of a mediæval knight. The whole scene and setting was that of a band of conspirators, the picture being woven together by the spiral threads of blue smoke from their cigarettes.

Preparations for dinner were in progress. Over a kerosene stove the soup-kettle simmered, giving forth odours in which I detected the savoury smell of Bovril. A small round table set with every variety of tin-ware mugs, bickers, enamelled cups, and even glass adorned the festive board. The centre of the table was piled with potted luxuries. The developing apparatus of a young photographic artist, who was busy drying his films in the adjoining ante-room, occupied a portion of the table. From out of the dim recess of the ante-room, which was used as a sleeping-room, emerged a fine young fellow who appeared to be a Turk, but who proved to be an Englishman named Frank Beevor.

In the course of a conversation he told me that he was not a correspondent, but a cavalry officer. In a spirit of adventure, and with a desire to extend his military experience, he had penetrated the country and worked his way to the front in a most daring and sportsmanlike manner.

He had evidently seen a good deal of the fighting, and he generously placed some very in-

teresting information with regard to it at my disposal. He had just returned from the battle of Lüle Burgas, where he and some of the correspondents had very nearly been blown to pieces by a bursting shell.

His description of the fighting is illustrated by the chart which is given at p. 201.

Reaching the village of Karistan on 29th October, when the battle had just commenced, he found that the Commander-in-Chief (Abdullah Pasha) and his staff had proceeded to a small conical hill resembling a tumulus. He went with the correspondents to this spot, where the General was directing the operations of his army.

At that time the position of the opposing forces (roughly described) was that the Turkish left rested on the railway close to Lüle Burgas, and the fighting line extended generally north-east towards Kirk Kilisse. The Turkish guns covered the town of Lüle Burgas. They had been placed on a high ridge about two or three thousand yards from the conical hill, and they commanded the approach to the railway, which here curved through a valley running in the direction of Adrianople.

The Bulgarian army, advancing from the north, occupied the long ridge of hills on the other side of Lüle Burgas, and tried to make an enveloping movement.

Their guns were directed upon the town and upon the Turkish positions. Their shrapnel burst too high,

but was so numerous that it presented the appearance of a flock of starlings. The common shell generally fell short.

The batteries which proved most destructive to the Turks were well placed on some high hills on the opposite side of the dividing valley, and were so well masked that they could maul the Turkish left, causing numerous casualties among the infantry and forcing their retirement.

The Turkish artillery which had been covering the town were disabled by the accurate fire of the Bulgarians, some of whose shells destroyed the Turkish ammunition and also set fire to the town in several places.

After the fighting had lasted more than two days, the Bulgarian artillery made a decided impression upon the Turkish positions.

Late on 30th October it had become evident that both flanks of the Turkish army had been turned by the Bulgarians, and the Turks began to fall back upon their supports.

About midday on 31st October it was observed that the General and his staff had left the hill, for the reason that the Bulgarian gunners had found the range and were directing a tremendous fire upon it.

At two o'clock on 31st October the general order for the retreat of the Turkish troops was given. The centre retired in open order, while the left retreated in a more scattered manner, but with deliberation.

Many of the soldiers were wandering about, apparently without definite instructions. This was doubtless due to the fact that there had been serious casualties among their officers, and to the presence of a large proportion of untrained and underfed Redifs.

The Bulgarians' advanced line occupied the railway station, and some of their cavalry rode up the valley, but were compelled to turn back by the heavy fire of a Turkish battery stationed on the hill to the left of the village of Karistan.

These guns, with the cavalry, had been charged with the task of covering the retreat and with fighting a rearguard action, which was not required as the Bulgarians were too exhausted to finish the pursuit. This gave the Turks the opportunity of rallying at Tchorlu.

Then came the deluge. It was a case of "sauve qui peut." It rained and rained. For days after the battle more wretched weather could not have been experienced. There was never a break or a gleam in the sullen, swollen, over-charged clouds. All military operations had to be suspended, waggon-trains of bread or supplies were compelled to remain where they were.

The mud of Thrace was as voracious as the Goodwin Sands, and the general spectacle presented was one worthy of being depicted by Edgar Allan Poe.

The announcement of dinner put a stop to Beevor's thrilling narrative for the time. We were quite a

jolly party. The round table accommodated everybody, and the banquet was a great success; but with loins girded, danger gave a spice of piquancy to the dishes. After dinner toasts were drunk, songs were given, and at least one party in Tchorlu spent a pleasant evening.

CHAPTER XI

WITH THE REMNANTS OF AN ARMY

On the day following the retreat from Lüle Burgas I began to review my position and to arrange for my future movements. I had a very difficult problem to solve, for I had no means of transporting my impedimenta or even myself.

Calling upon the Press Censor, Vashki Bey gave me orders to be ready to proceed with him and the other correspondents, with our belongings, to Tcherkesh Keui, where it was expected we should get a train to convey us to Tchatalja. If the Bulgarians' advance was too rapid to permit of this arrangement being carried out, the Bey had the alternative plan of taking us to Media, a port on the Black Sea, and of sending us thence by boat to Constantinople.

Arriving at the rendezvous the next morning I explained that I had no means of transport for my baggage or myself, and asked Vashki Bey if he could help me. He regretted that it was impossible to do so.

I was the only correspondent in the whole of Tchorlu who was thus stranded, and my position was hardly enviable. That I should be captured I felt certain, but I did not think I should be in personal danger, unless a soldier in an excess of zeal should

THE FIRST SQUARE MEAL FOR TEN DAYS, THRACE

LINE OF RETREAT FROM LÜLE BURGAS

HOW THE WOUNDED TRAVELLED IN THRACE

TROOPERS BILLETED AT A FARM, TCHORLU

send a bullet through my fez, which I had worn throughout as a means of identification and protection against mishaps.

Some of the townsmen might have desired to show their sympathy with the victorious army, whose arrival was expected now at any moment.

The town was completely in the hands of the mob. The last of the Turkish soldiers, with a company of Maxims, were detailed to hold the enemy in check for a few hours to give the main body a little more time to rally at Tchatalja.

As I was passing through the market square, wondering how I was to extricate myself from my difficulties, I was hailed by a young officer who had been with me in Tripoli, and who came galloping by with his orderly. On seeing me he stopped, and after our first greetings I told him my trouble. He said, "I'll get you a horse." The orderly rode off, and returned in half an hour with a venerable cream-coloured brute. Salim took the precaution of locking up my new steed with Leighton's, and together we perambulated the town in search of a waggon. I was offered a vehicle of that kind and a miserable pair of donkeys, but these animals were so tired that they were incapable of moving the empty waggon. I was asked thirty pounds for them, and as we might not have been able to find anything better I gave the man a sovereign, in the event of my not concluding the deal.

We spent another couple of hours splashing

about the puddled streets, after the rain had ceased and the sun was shining, in searching for a buffalo waggon which would suit us.

On the very outskirts of the town we overtook one that was being taken to the railway station in the hope of securing a load of spoil, for there was nobody there in a position to protect property of any kind. All the rolling-stock was at the Tcherkesh Keui.

After persuading and negotiating with the owner, we induced him to let us have the outfit, and brought it in triumph to Leighton's house, where there was much rejoicing.

All the baggage was being stowed on the rickety ox waggon, when a report reached the town to the effect that the Bulgarians were only a mile away, and would take possession of it towards sunset. This had such an effect on the nerves of the owner that he offered to sell the outfit for anything that we chose to give him, but he would not stop or drive it himself. Salim paid him a ridiculously small sum for it, and off he went.

We were then ready to start, but we could not do so because no one could drive the buffaloes. The difficulty caused by this new development threatened to put a stop to our progress, when Salim came to the fore again. In some mysterious way he had heard of two men who were anxious to get to Tcherkesh Keui. With them he made a bargain to drive the waggons there —which was, in fact, all we wanted from them, as we

understood the line was still open, and that trains were running. We started a gay cavalcade. Sir Bryan led the procession, mounted on a beautiful white Arab, Gordon the operator acting as aide-de-camp. Old Salim rode a small vicious pony, with his thin legs dangling almost to the ground.

I superintended the waggon, on which fluttered the Union Jack. My pack-horse came in tow. I had a certain misgiving as to the stability of the vehicle. The wheels were wobbly, and looked as if they would collapse at any moment. Our buffaloes, although tired, had plenty of energy, and we proceeded at the rate of quite one mile an hour.

The mud in places looked so bad that I had great doubt of our being able to accomplish the journey of some twelve or fifteen miles. Under ordinary circumstances we should have arrived at our destination by sunset of the following day.

We passed the Maxim battery just outside the town, and my friend the young Bey, who was in command, wished me to take the road to Silivri, on the Sea of Marmora, where, he said, "we are going to make a stand, and you will see some fighting." Of this we had great doubts, as Silivri is only a few miles by sea from Stamboul. We had judged correctly, as it proved that the place would be surrendered.

We proceeded to Tcherkesh Keui. There was no difficulty in finding the road, which was thronged with refugees and war-worn soldiers. We crept

on at a funeral pace, the poor cattle keeping up bravely.

Cavalry detachments passed us on every side, and evidence of the character of the terrible drama that was being enacted was provided by the derelict waggons with broken wheels. These abandoned vehicles provided fuel for the camp fires. I noticed a wheel, the hub of which had been converted into a heap of ashes, while the spokes were still smouldering. There were many of these wheel fires, and the solid hub of one waggon being still alight, provided us with an excellent fire with which to boil the water in our kettle.

We had completed a distance of only five miles when we found that our animals were in such a distressed condition that we were forced to camp for the night. The poor beasts could go no further, and one of them was trembling violently.

A farm-house, which stood in a grove of trees right ahead of us, gave promise of a supply of water and fuel. Camp fires twinkled round the yard. We unloaded the tent bedding and boxes, and while we were erecting the tent we sent Salim ahead to spy out the land, to take the buffaloes to feed, and to find shelter from the icy blasts which crept over the high ground after nightfall. He returned soon afterwards with the information that the farm-house was in the possession of the soldiers, and that the Red Crescent was established there.

The horses and cattle were turned loose in the

big barns where they stood back deep in forage, which supplied them with the food and warmth of which they were in so much need, and which they had richly earned by their exertions. Hundreds of tons of chaff and straw littered the place in which the soldiers had bivouacked.

With the aid of water and wood which Salim had obtained we soon had some food cooking, and were enabled to dine royally. Three of us slept in Sir Bryan's ample tent.

The following morning we made a fairly early start, after partaking of a breakfast in which the underdone porridge was not very palatable. Everything was wet with the heavy night dew, and notwithstanding the fact that we had provided ourselves with plenty of bedding, we were chilled to the marrow, for the fire could not be persuaded to burn.

The day was bright and cloudless, and the roads, under the action of wind and sun, were drying nicely, with the exception of the mud holes.

The town of Tchorlu with its minarets and quaint windmills looked peaceful and quiet. Our animals had benefited to such an extent by their plentiful feed and rest that they had recovered some of their spirit. This they proved by indulging in a kicking match, thus playing havoc in the camp. One of the buffaloes was evidently very sick, and we were obliged to yoke the poor patient brute.

The staying powers of these animals are truly

remarkable. I could not understand how they managed to drag the heavily-loaded waggons through the mud holes. In my opinion we ought to have had at least six to do the work.

The march that day was slower and more painful even than that of the previous one. At noon we made a halt close to a shallow dam where many soldiers were resting. Some of them were drinking water, others were washing their clothes, whilst many lay on the banks in the luxury of a deep refreshing sleep, warmed by the rays of the noonday sun. It was a hopeful scene of tranquillity and a haven of rest after the awful experiences of the last few days.

During the day we saw many footsore and weary groups resting by the roadside. All cares had been forgotten in that refreshing bath of brilliant warmth and sunshine. They had eaten little, it is true, but the edge of their hunger and suffering had been blunted. At Tcherkesh Keui they believed there would be an abundance of food, and with this hope to inspire them they trudged courageously onwards.

There was a big tobacco farm standing at the cross-roads, one of which leads to the railway and the other to the sea at Silivri. This farm was held by a regiment of infantry with some Maxims. There was also a plentiful supply of bread, or rather flour. The men were busily engaged in making it into broad flat cakes which they baked on sheets of

corrugated iron. Sheep, goats, cattle and poultry were scattered about, and rows of maize hung outside the house to dry in the sun. It speaks volumes for the morale of the army that many thousands of starving men had passed by such tempting fare without helping themselves.

CHAPTER XII

FROM BLACK DESPAIR TO DAWNING HOPE

CAVALRY pack-horses came along singly, or in twos or threes; a train of pack-mules followed with a number of rifles which had been taken from the dead soldiers. All these incidents testify to the fact that the so-called panic had been much exaggerated. It might be, and it was, a scene of terrible confusion, but the troops were not demoralised. I took some photographs here, which were unfortunately lost.

When we continued our route we took with us some forage for the animals. Our way lay over a bleak upland, and a cutting wind compelled us to stop at about three o'clock. Some correspondents who were riding out with the object of securing material for despatches to their newspapers came upon the scene, and I opened a bottle of red wine for them. We toasted each other; they blessed me, and proceeding on their way I saw them no more. They were bound for Silivri.

As one of our buffaloes could not move another foot we found ourselves in a somewhat unpleasant dilemma. Tcherkesh Keui was only six miles away, and yet we were unable to reach it. To make matters worse our drivers mutinied, and told us all sorts of

blood-curdling tales about highway robbers, and we were quite unable to induce them to stop with us even when we refused to give them backsheesh. We were not, however, daunted by their desertion, and Leighton proved to be one of the most wonderful campaigners I have ever met.

We erected bell tents and piled up all our packages in such a way as to act as a wind-screen. The petrol stove was lighted, and bacon and sausages were soon frizzling over it. It will thus be seen that our troubles did not have the effect of spoiling our appetites. We fed the buffaloes, and having left them to look after themselves, tied our horses to the waggon. The cold was Siberian. A wandering soldier was induced to stop with us. We fed him and gave him coffee, on the condition that he would help us to drive the horses and the waggons on the following day. He shared the small tent with Salim, and on the whole the arrangement proved to be a satisfactory one. Our late drivers' hints about night marauders were not altogether ignored by us, for we slept under arms. Towards dawn the cold was so intense that it woke me up, and I heard a commotion amongst the horses. I went to them just in time to catch my pack-horse, which had broken loose, and was about to make off. I brought him back, and then went round to look for the buffaloes. I found the poor beasts lying down a couple of hundred yards away. I petted them, but they resented it. I felt anxious about

the delicate buffalo, as he was shivering from the cold and trembling from fatigue.

As there were still some hours before daylight, I turned in once more; but Salim was very noisy, and his shouting woke me up completely. When I asked him the cause of all this hubbub, he said he was trying to drive away a white bullock, which was endeavouring to get at a few straws of forage left by our animals. I stopped his shouting and claimed the beast.

"But," said Salim, "he belong to the Sultan."

I persisted in claiming the animal, and it was fortunate for us that I did so, for our sick buffalo could scarcely stand.

I discussed with Leighton the question whether we should push on to Silivri, which was fifteen miles distant, hire a small craft, store all our belongings, and go by sea to Stamboul. This plan appealed to me very strongly, although Tcherkesh Keui was only six miles away. The railway was there, but the Bulgarian cavalry were working in that direction. The condition of our teams helped us to a decision. The new bullock proved strong, and we made better progress. The mounted portion of the caravan scouted ahead. I went back to the waggon and walked, quite enjoying it.

The sky afterwards clouded over, and there was a slight fall of snow, while a piercing wind made riding a positive torture. Gordon offered me his horse, but I declined it, and he walked beside me leading the

brute, complaining of being almost paralysed by the cold. Leighton also walked a good deal. We marched through ruined villages; some were burning and others were smouldering. Soldiers were warming themselves at the blaze. The ground was strewn with tobacco.

The maturing crops constitute the wealth of the district, and many of them had not been garnered. It was a scene of such utter desolation that I hope I shall never see the like again. My sick buffalo gave me the slip in this village. He had evidently wandered into some derelict farm-yard, where I hope he satisfied his hunger and got the rest which he so much needed. I saw many cattle and poultry straying, and the inevitable pariahs. The road followed the course of the river, and got heavier. Gordon completely broke down, whereupon I relieved him of his horse, and put him on the waggon.

We struck the railway station at 4 P.M. Here we were mixed up with a pack of animals and countless refugees, many of whom camped on the rails. They reminded me of locusts. Soldiers were camped on either side for miles. With great difficulty we discovered the officer in command, put our case before him, and asked for a pass for Tchatalja. He told us that there was no train going that day, but at four o'clock on the following afternoon there would be one, and he would place a carriage at our service. In the meantime we looked for some camping place.

The Red Cross camp was an open cesspool, and the hospital tents were full of wounded and fever

patients. Rotten straw, soaked with the filth of the sewage of a hospital, was the best that could be used for the poor fellows, who never complained. Doctors and officers worked hard to alleviate their misery, and everything was done under the circumstances that was humanly possible. But to keep the camp in anything like working order, one required the proper conveniences and the necessary transport to work with.

The scenes at night were almost hellish in their appearance and character, for sulphur fumes hung over everything, and mountains of charcoal were smouldering like small volcanoes around us.

The village, which was about a couple of miles away, looked more promising, and a charming officer secured for us billets in one of the houses. I understood it was that which the Commander-in-Chief, Abdullah Pasha, had occupied while he stopped there. But it is one thing to be allotted a house in one of these straggling Turkish villages, and quite another thing to find it. We started our weary search for our house, but each building seemed to be occupied by troops, and everything was wrecked and in disorder. Every now and then shots would be heard. These were being fired by the soldiers at ownerless fowl and geese. Cows and calves that were wandering about forced their way through broken fences and enjoyed bountiful meals off the hayricks and maize.

We went to several houses, but finding them occupied we decided to camp in the straw, which

had been scattered about the gardens to the depth of several feet. By erecting our tent on the top of this straw we could all sleep as in feather beds. But although we were well provided for in that respect, the cold wind and trying march had made us almost famishing for want of food.

Poor Gordon collapsed entirely, and lay on his back on the straw. I covered him with a rug, and he fell asleep at once. By this time we were almost too tired to eat, but we sat down to bully beef, potted tongue, and other dainties, which we supplemented by a bottle of liqueur brandy and plenty of good water.

Providentially the colonel in command of the village was making his rounds and saw us through the hedge. We invited him to join us, and he at once accepted our invitation. During the meal he sent one of his orderlies to find the house for which we had vainly searched, and to bring back some coffee. We prevailed on him to try our brandy, to ward off the effects of the cold. Some of it went down the wrong way, bringing on a violent fit of coughing, which greatly excited our risible faculties. On very good terms with each other we proceeded to our house, which the orderly had found for us. We found it to be quite a villa in a pretty garden. On the ground-floor there were two rooms. Into a long room-like passage which ran at the back we bundled with all our belongings. A fire was smouldering on the hearth, and when a plentiful supply of

wood had been found we soon had a good blaze. Some chickens had meanwhile been purchased from the soldiers, as well as bread—actually fresh new bread—the smell of which was almost a meal in itself. The big domestic pot was soon put on the fire, and in it were placed the chickens, a portion of kid, some tinned beef and tongue, with curry powder and biscuits, thus composing a pot-pourri fit for the gods. What a sauce hunger is!

Gordon lay by the fire until he had thawed. The camp beds were put up and we actually slept in our pyjamas. The health of Salim the cook was drunk with musical honours, and what was still more appreciated by him, he was well "backsheeshed."

We slept far into the forenoon. After a late breakfast we called on our jovial host, the colonel, to ask his advice with reference to our plans. The train for Tchatalja was timed to start at 4 P.M. This would give us lots of time and enable us to explore the village.

The village was prettily situated on the sunny side of the hills which sloped down to the railway station. The intervening plain was a veritable quagmire, and it was necessary to cross this quagmire to reach the railway. We selected a shorter and more direct way which led us over a very frail foot-bridge, consisting of rickety planks unprotected by guard rails.

To get the wounded across this frail structure

was a work of great difficulty, and much time was occupied in the task. Then we came upon a scene of orderly confusion; the train was being filled with sick and wounded and refugees, including women and children who had been perched on the roofs of the cars.

The rays of the sun and the beauty of the day appeared to relieve their drooping spirits and impart new vigour to them after their terrible experiences on the line of retreat. The result was that there was a general air of peace and contentment, and the women took advantage of the opportunities afforded them to attend to their toilet, and to improve their personal appearance in the many ways in which they can give themselves pleasure.

It might almost be compared to a land of promise after their wanderings and privations. The bakeries had been working at full swing to supply the loaves, and these loaves had been cut into halves and placed in sacks, which were brought by the soldiers to the hungry people who had been so anxiously waiting for this most welcome relief.

No gourmand could have enjoyed the dinner provided by the most skilled chef as these poor refugees and soldiers enjoyed this meal of bread. Yet all around them were scenes of ruin and desolation; scarcely a house had remained undamaged. The garden fences had been broken down; the fruit trees had been stripped of their branches to provide fuel for the fires; the tobacco plantations had been trampled

down; and numbers of stray cattle had been eating their fill of garden produce.

Straw littered the ground—pitiful remnants of an utterly spoiled harvest—everywhere dirty battle-stained soldiers were coming and going, with the result of their foraging in the surrounding country. The mosques had been turned into barracks for the time being, but these sacred edifices were nevertheless treated by the men with the greatest respect. It was strange to see the soldiers coming out of the mosques to wash themselves at the fountain before entering to make their devotions.

Sir Bryan got a good film of a troop of cavalry as they wound through a crooked street. They rode in good formation, displaying no signs of having participated in a panic-stricken retreat. We walked to the station, which was situated some two miles away from the village, through the mud and filthy litter of old camps, the stench from which was truly awful as we approached the station. Our experiences of this kind became worse. I must confess that I had never previously seen human beings in such a terrible plight. Yet with it all there was no complaining, no giving way to despair, under circumstances that might have made the stoutest heart quail. It was "Kismet," and the faith underlying it, which animated and supported them.

Mustafa Bey, the commandant at the station who was in charge of the transport arrangements, told us he was certainly sending off a train that evening,

thus confirming the statement made by the colonel, adding that if we brought our baggage to the station by 6 P.M. we should be in time for it.

Meanwhile we visited the hospitals again and found that there were plenty of tinned stores there. Had the accommodation been better the patients would no doubt have enjoyed comparative comfort; but the position as they found it had to meet requirements. I marvelled at the rapid manner in which the wounds of the soldiers were healing.

CHAPTER XIII

RALLYING AT TCHATALJA

We took leave of our hospitable hosts rather late in the afternoon, and did not reach the railway till after sunset. We unloaded, and relieved each other by turns in looking after the horses and attending to the baggage. Apparent confusion reigned, but there was some method in it all. Crowds of people lay or sat about the railway track, but, although the trains were constantly being shunted, I did not hear of any accidents.

It was at this stage that I was obliged to part with our useful buffalo transport, as it was impossible to take it by train. All we could do was to start the buffaloes with the empty waggon on their lonely way, and the last I saw of them they were crossing the railway in search of food.

Meanwhile everyone was busy at the station—too busy, in fact, to look after the correspondents. At length my desolate appearance attracted the attention of one of the "big men," who very considerately asked if he could be of any service to me. I inquired whether it would be possible to settle the question of transportation. Taking me by the arm he walked with me into the telegraph office, which was full of officials tapping at the machines for dear life. The

gentleman in charge, leaving his work for the moment, supplied me with passes for our party and our horses, at the same time telegraphing down the line to advise the authorities of our expected advent.

At ten o'clock the train, which had been shunting for hours, apparently aimlessly, came at last to a standstill. Without waiting for our servants we began our own portering, and stowed everything into a third-class compartment, out of which the authorities had considerately turned a lot of soldiers.

The train was packed with soldiers and people, who rode in horse-boxes, cattle trucks, and coal trucks. The sick and wounded lay on top of each other, and even the roofs of the carriages were crowded. How the wounded survived that freezing night was a mystery to me. The sufferings, too, of the women, children, young babies, and old grandparents, balanced on the curved roof, must have been terrible as the train rushed through the bitter wind.

Our kind and generous hosts would not allow us to travel with the baggage, but insisted on giving us places in a nicely warmed second-class compartment, which was occupied by two doctors, who cheerfully arranged to make room for three.

The scene then presented was a weird and picturesque one. Soldiers were carrying long torches, which threw a fitful line on the crowd, giving them, with their distorted shadows, an almost Dantesque effect.

Just before starting an order was given that the

wounded in the hospital who were able to get to the train might scramble in, and then began the most extraordinary obstacle race I ever beheld. Many men were handicapped by their wounds. A few of the sick were able to walk, others managed to hobble across the metals with the support of comrades, while some actually crawled and rolled to the train. One poor fellow managed to creep close to the rails, where his strength failed him. He shouted loudly "Effendi! Effendi!" Leighton and I lifted him up, and supported him to one of the crowded horse-boxes, where his presence was strongly objected to. We gave him a hoist and he rolled over those who blocked the door, falling on the layer behind. There was some disturbance inside, but he finally settled there.

We were then really off at last; the two engines panted as they toiled at the heavy load. Our progress was necessarily slow, as the line was guarded by pickets stationed at intervals, who had the appearance of animated signal-posts, and who frequently held us up to tell us the condition of the line immediately ahead.

A cold bright moon lighted the country, showing the details of the camps we passed with great clearness.

We beguiled the monotony by cooking a dinner. The ever-resourceful Leighton produced his spirit-stove, and we partook of a simple menu which we all thoroughly enjoyed. It was followed by *café a la Turque* made by one of the doctors. We wound up

in a most satisfactory manner with old cognac and cigars. Some of the brandy was served out by one of the doctors to the most seriously wounded on the train. Cat naps or dozes filled up the time until four o'clock A.M., when we ran through the lines at Tchatalja, where we had intended to stop, if possible.

The huge camp looked most picturesque as we approached it, there being hundreds of watch-fires in shallow pits, round which the soldiers huddled. These pits might be about two feet deep, making excellent wind-screens. The effect was curious and fascinating, reminding me of the fire pits in the *Inferno*.

The officer in command at Tchatalja informed us that the train would remain there for at least six or eight hours, so that we should gain nothing by leaving the train until daylight; we accordingly stuck to our berths and fell asleep. When we awoke, to our dismay and regret we found ourselves close to San Stephano, but there was no turning back. Stamboul was now our evident destination, and we reached it by ten o'clock that morning.

Worse was, however, to happen. One misfortune was followed by another. Half of the train in which our horses were being carried had been left behind at Tchatalja. This was a serious blow to us, but one that could not be avoided. We ought to have been allowed to stop at Tchatalja. It seemed as if the authorities preferred our room to our company. It was quite possible that the General in command

would not have allowed us to remain at Tchatalja, under the circumstances in which the army was placed. It would have been madness to have allowed correspondents to see anything of the preparations for the defence of the position at that time.

I must confess that I was not at all sorry to see the glittering waters of the Golden Horn once more. On arriving at Stamboul we hired a number of porters to carry our goods and chattels to the hotel. M. Tokatlian expressed the greatest joy at my safe return, and told me that my room, No. 80, was ready for me. I ordered a special *déjeuner*, and meanwhile enjoyed the luxury of a good hot bath.

Almost the first man I met at Constantinople was Beevor, which gave me great pleasure, for I had been somewhat anxious as to his safety. In the confusion of war the correspondents had been separated from each other, with the natural result that inquiries were often being made as to the fate of such and such a friend.

In the course of our conversation he gave me some very interesting information with reference to his movements and experiences since we had parted. His story, which I am pleased to be able to give, was as follows:

"After leaving you in the deserted square at Tchorlu, I started with Ashmead-Bartlett, of the *Daily Telegraph*, hoping to see something of the Bulgarians. We rode out of the town, picking our way among the dead carcases of beasts of burden

on the Lüle Burgas road. We attracted very little notice, but I took the precaution of turning my bracelet watch inwards in case it might prove too attractive and worth looting, should we meet any Bulgarians.

"We were fortunate in having a good stout Englishman—one Bryant—who understood the East and its languages. We kept to the Lüle Burgas road for a few miles, seeing nothing save wreck and ruin, and a few weary soldiers sitting in the mud at the roadside, waiting for death to release them from their misery.

"Not seeing any sign of the pursuing Bulgarians, we decided to steer north-west over the open country. We fell in with a band of about twenty deserters, nearly all of whom had thrown away their arms and equipment. These fellows were travelling in a south-easterly direction—towards their homes. Evidently they were part of the right wing. They told us that they had seen no Bulgarians, but they had heard that they intended striking for Tcherkesh Keui to cut off the retreat. At any rate they were taking no risks, and were 'fed up' with the war.

"This story of the enemy's movements, if true, concerned us, as we stood a chance of being captured. Wearing, as I did, the uniform of a Turkish soldier, without passport or credentials of any kind, it would have meant a bullet for breakfast.

"In the circumstances we thought it would be as well to make a bee-line for Tcherkesh Keui, which

we hoped to reach that night. A bitter north wind sprang up and cleared the sky, and at the same time hardened the roads, which of course would be an advantage to the pursuing army. We succeeded only, however, in reaching Tchorlu, which was now deserted by soldiers and left entirely in the hands of the Greek element and two correspondents—yourself and Sir Bryan Leighton. The Greeks of course were waiting to greet the Allies, and it was strongly suspected that these people had been sending money to the enemy.

"We left Tchorlu for good at midday in a two-horsed 'norabudgee,' or light four-wheeled cart. We managed to secure a driver—an Albanian—dressed in the picturesque costume of his country. He quite realised that our position was somewhat dangerous and precarious, and he swore by Allah and the butt of a revolver which he carried in his sash to bring us to Constantinople inside of a week. At first the road was so bad, with mud up to the axles, that it almost stopped us. After a time we struck a broad track along the slope of the hills. A few miles further we came up with the rear of the retreating army. We pushed along and soon passed the bulk of the refugees. If a cart broke down or turned over, it was instantly thrust on one side to leave a clear passage for the guns, which the gunners made the most heroic efforts to save. Nearly all the horses were exhausted. I noticed the men who served several guns pulling away and trying to

RETREAT OF THE TURKS TOWARDS TCHORLU

rescue the Krupps, until absolute fatigue compelled them to abandon the guns.

"We arrived at a picturesque village, situated in a quiet little dale, almost hidden amongst orchards and fruit trees. This village was apparently quite deserted, the only inhabitants seeming to be a noisy flock of white geese.

"Why the hungry refugees had not caught them, I cannot imagine. I soon captured one, thus setting perhaps a bad example. But necessity knows no law. Some soldiers resting by the roadside quickly followed my lead, and in less than two minutes every goose which did not fly away was caught. My bird arrived safely in Constantinople, not through any compunction on my part about killing him, but through the utter impossibility of making a fire wherewith to cook him. We struck the railway a few miles north of Tcherkesh Keui, where the road follows the river. My pony 'Casay' shied at what appeared to me to be a bundle of rags. On closer inspection of it I was horrified to see it was a half-buried corpse.

"As we neared Tcherkesh Keui the confusion increased. The mud and slush, which were mixed with camp refuse at every step, gave forth odours that wafted up the breath of death. From north to north-east the country was black with fugitives, and the crush was so bad that thousands of them gave up the attempt to reach the station, bivouacking in the cold night among the hills."

CHAPTER XIV

THE MIGRATION OF A NATION

"On reaching Tcherkesh Keui we reported ourselves to Vashki Bey, who was overjoyed at the return of some of his scattered flock, many of whom he never expected to see alive again. Seats were secured in the last train going to Stamboul. There were three other trains standing in the station, crammed with sick and wounded. The strongest men rode on the roofs. Sentries were posted over the trains, with fixed bayonets, to keep off the clamouring crowd, and there was a good deal of delay in getting them off. I witnessed many distressing spectacles. Refugees were begging and praying on their knees to be allowed to ride on the couplings of the carriages. They were frantic with terror at the bare idea of falling into the hands of the advancing and victorious Bulgarians. Rumours and reports of the most horrible acts of wanton cruelty were of course believed. Whether these reports were justified or not I cannot say.

"All this time the engines were puffing and snorting in their efforts to move the overladen train. At last the senior officer decided to leave the two end carriages, which were filled with desperately wounded soldiers, to their fate and proceed. To this

the doctors offered such strong objections that a compromise was effected. The wounded were taken on and a number of refugees were left behind instead.

"There was no room for our horses or baggage, so we determined to stick to our property. Bryant advised us to camp and send the Albanian to try and get some forage for the animals. Meantime we made our dinner of dry bread and treacle, supplemented by some biscuits generously presented to us by a correspondent. These were saturated with kerosene, which did not improve their flavour. However, it satisfied our hunger, and the kerosene seemed to keep out the cold. In the middle of our meal the tent began moving, and one end was ripped open.

"Running outside I found that the Albanian, with his usual carelessness, had left the horses in the cart, simply fastening the guys and ropes of our tent to the wheels. Of course the poor animals attempted to wander off in search of food. He refused point-blank to remove the harness, but made a compromise by taking the animals out of the cart. Misfortunes never come singly. In the confusion poor Ashmead-Bartlett's head came into collision with the tent pole, which practically knocked him out. Under these conditions we decided not to start until midnight. When Bryant called us at that hour I crawled out into the bitter night to assist in the packing. I shall never forget the scene that presented itself. The hills for miles round were dotted with watch-fires, and further illumined by burning houses and villages,

round which the soldiers were chattering, having fully recovered their spirits. They were amusing themselves by throwing handfuls of cartridges into the flames. What fun soldiers can thus get I cannot imagine. But some such incidents happened in Cambridgeshire during the 1912 manœuvres, when there was a tragic ending. One of the soldiers was injured seriously by an exploding cartridge during a sing-song.

"Trains were constantly leaving the station in the direction of Stamboul. The shrill shrieks of the engine added to the despairing cries of those who were left behind, and the yells of triumph and praises to Allah from the more fortunate ones who were on the roofs of the carriages. It was a veritable pandemonium of noise. The pitiful cries and wailing of the children were by far the most pathetic notes in this weird chorus.

"The cold now was so intense that I could not keep warm, notwithstanding the heavy sheepskin coat I was wearing. What the sufferings of the feeble women and perishing children—most of them lightly clad in cotton garments—must have been, I leave you to imagine.

"Long before daylight the wail of many an infant had ceased in death. Mothers actually threw their babies off the train, leaving them to a chance burial. No one dared to leave the trains, as their places would have been instantly taken by others. The enormous bivouac broke up and started wearily. It was a

solemn and impressive scene—the migration of a nation.

"We could not possibly have marched among such a crowd. I had perforce to remain by the tent all night, keeping watch and ward over our little camp. The Albanian, who squatted before the fire, of course fell asleep and allowed it to go out, much to our annoyance, as we could get no coffee or tea, and had to satisfy ourselves with kerosene biscuits and dirty water. We made a bad start, for in crossing the metals one wheel of our cart stuck so badly that it took four soldiers to lift it out.

"It was pretty evident that the Turks were not going to leave the enemy much at Tcherkesh Keui. A couple of regiments which had never been at the front were in charge of the camp. These fellows were burning all the buildings. By the way, these were the first organised troops I had seen since the battle, and the last I was to see until some weeks afterwards, when I witnessed the landing at Stamboul of the reinforcements from Asia.

"Whilst journeying along in company with the refugees, we noticed a singular-looking old gentleman mounted on a mangy-looking white pony of some antiquity. He was dressed in the uniform of a surgeon-colonel. The sun was shining and the day was hot. The colonel shaded himself with an old umbrella. We happened to be photographing the crowd at the time, and he signalled us with his 'gamp' and at the same time intimated his desire

to be taken. We made a great show of posing him, which pleased him very much.

"On separating, he gave us his name and address on a very dirty-looking piece of paper, and we parted the best of friends. Towards the afternoon we saw him again, when he told us to look for him at the next halting-place, about ten miles farther on, where he promised to give us some bread for ourselves and corn for our animals. He said he would also endeavour to procure for us a couple of Mausers. 'They might be useful,' he said, 'in your hands, should the Bulgarians come up with us. They would also come in handy in case of an attack on the Christians.'

"For the first time we heard that King Ferdinand had declared a Holy War, and we wished at that moment he was with us. From a high hill which dominated the country we were able to realise the magnitude of the immigration, for the whole place seemed to be black with people, animals, and vehicles of all sorts and kinds. Many of the women were unveiled, but they hastily concealed their faces as we passed by. There was one exception—a most beautiful woman, almost white, evidently a Circassian, deathly pale from exposure and misery. She evidently cared not who saw her; indeed she was very like a handsome London lady of my acquaintance.

"I realised the horrors of war, and it made my blood boil to see so much misery, caused by greed and selfishness, cloaked by the hypocritical pretence

of reforms. Reforms may be needed, but like other changes they should be allowed to grow.

"At sundown we halted at a railway station with some unpronounceable name. Our old friend the surgeon-colonel was as good as his word, so far as food was concerned, but the water was short. This was the case everywhere. Every station has its pump for general use, but there is no arrangement for emergencies.

"We were fortunate in securing good sleeping quarters, a house being placed at our disposal. I made a good loose-box for my horse between the staircase and the back parlour, and gave him as much corn as he could eat. About thirty Bulgarian prisoners were brought in and lodged in the house next door. They were well treated and supplied with food and warmth. In this bitter weather their lot was a happy one contrasted with most of their captors, who sat outside in the frosty biting wind.

"With Turkish officers our party had increased to twelve. We had a sort of basket picnic, each bringing what he could. I am afraid that our Turkish friends contributed more than their share. We had the goose, and very good it was. Bartlett suddenly recollected that he had a bottle of champagne stowed away in his baggage. This was quickly produced, carefully measured, and shared equally. In four days we reached Stamboul."

CHAPTER XV

MAHMOUD MUKHTAR PASHA'S NARROW ESCAPE FROM DEATH

WHILE I was staying at the hotel I received a letter from my friend, Mr. E. N. Bennett, ex-M.P., who had been wondering what had happened to me since we were at Tchorlu together. We had parted at the railway depot there, as his official position enabled him to travel with the foreign military attachés. He had since had some strange experiences, which I am in a position to describe in these pages.

It appears that he had procured horses and ridden as far as Vise, which town lies in the direction of Kirk Kilisse, in order to watch the operations of Mukhtar Pasha's divisions. He could not stay there long, however, for the reason that within a short time after his arrival the determined and well-sustained Bulgarian attacks had driven back the ill-fed and badly-organised Turkish forces. The Ottoman soldiers retreated, with their sick and wounded, to seek refuge behind the lines of Tchatalja.

My friend's description of the hardships and terrors of the Turkish retreat, or rather rout—for the army became nothing more than a huge mob of panic-stricken men, whose numbers were con-

tinually being swollen by the influx of hundreds of terrorised peasantry—is very similar to my own.

It was trying to beast as well as man, so great a pace had to be kept up to avoid the pursuing squadrons of victorious Bulgarian cavalry, and so bad was the condition of the country, particularly of the roads. To fill the cup of misery to the very brim it rained in torrents, which changed even the face of the countryside. Brooks and ditches became rivers, ponds became lakes, fields and moorland became swamps and treacherous morasses.

The swollen rivers rendered the bridges unsafe, and swept some of them away altogether. Mr. Bennett and his party, including several attachés, together with their servants, narrowly escaped being drowned in a river, through which they tried to swim their horses.

After many adventures and hairbreadth escapes, of a kind that are more interesting to read about than to undergo, they reached the town of Tchorlu. There they waited in the cold—not that bright cheerful cold that comes with frost and is so pleasant and exhilarating, but that horrible damp cold in which a man shivers, chilled to the bone—without a dry stitch of clothing to their backs, for the reappearance of the train which some hours previously had left heavily laden.

So inadequate and bad was the hospital accommodation for the great numbers of casualties, that room in tents and sheds could only be found for the lesser

half, whilst the remainder crawled between box cars, trucks, and even the platform itself, in order to find shelter from the downpour of rain. In such distressing straits did these unfortunate wounded soldiers find themselves, that death must have come as a welcome relief to many of them. Even those who were in the tents, and whose lot was superior to that of the sufferers in the open air, were by no means comfortable, as the word is generally understood when sick persons are concerned. Some of them certainly had plenty of room, but these were in a very small minority. The majority were packed as tight as sardines in a tin within the shelters, many even being with half their bodies exposed to the weather.

Eight hours later—and very long hours they must have been—the train arrived, and by great good luck the little party secured room in one of the carriages for their journey to Stamboul. Quantities of refugees clambered aboard, and at length the train started. That night the party slept comfortably and safely in a Pera hotel, having left the greater part of their troubles behind them.

Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha left the train at Hadem Keui, and a few days later great consternation was excited in patriotic circles in Constantinople, in consequence of the publication of the news by several of the best informed journals of the gallant Pasha's death. Fortunately the report of the General's decease was contradicted the next day. It appeared,

however, that he had been dangerously wounded, although no serious fears were entertained in regard to his recovery. The hopeful anticipations that were formed in this respect were afterwards justified, but there was mourning over the fact that the greater part of his staff had been killed, and that the rest had been placed *hors de combat.*

Bennett's description of what had so nearly become a catastrophe can scarcely fail to be of interest to my readers. The story of what took place has been told to me several times, and as each account came from an entirely different source, and the main particulars and most important points tallied with the salient features of the others, I have every reason to think that his narrative rests on a perfectly sound and firm foundation of fact. I believe, indeed, that it is quite true, and therefore append it.

Desiring to test the truth of certain reports, the Pasha rode out with his staff, quite unnecessarily, as it appears, until he got within the fiercest zone of the shrapnel fire. The terrible risks he was running alarmed even his officers. Vainly, however, did they expostulate with him, and endeavour to persuade him to retire. With that wild and rash valour which is characteristic of the Moslem, he adhered to his self-imposed but useless task, heedless alike of shrapnel and the fire of the enemy's pickets. Continuing his tour of inspection, he rode from position to position amid a veritable hailstorm of death-dealing leaden projectiles.

While he was thus running the gauntlet of death he was enveloped in the long light-grey cloak of regulation pattern, which all other Ottoman officers wear.

The casualties among these officers throughout the campaign were very heavy, and were due, I am firmly convinced, to the fact that they were wearing a uniform altogether different from that of the private soldiers. They thus presented such conspicuous targets that the enemy could always single them out and pick them off, and in this way deprive the Turks of their commanders.

Worn out by fatigue and hunger, the Pasha and his staff arrived at the advanced post, which was situated a short distance beyond Eivathi. Dismounting there they entered a bell tent, and partook of such refreshments as the small outpost could provide, and slept for a few hours. At early dawn they were again in the saddle, riding toward the last and most advanced position, Kativilli. A small Bulgarian vedette was then already in position, some miles distant to the right towards the shores of Lake Derkos.

Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha and his gallant little band of followers rode along the road which rises and falls, and turns and twists amid the picturesque hills that form the principal feature of that neighbourhood in the direction of Kativilli. As they proceeded they chatted cheerfully, all thoughts of danger being thrown to the winds, for were not their countrymen

occupying a position ahead? Apparently they did not anticipate that a group of mounted men clattering along, with no semblance of order, would attract the attention of the enemy, much less that that compact mass would be a splendid mark for the sharpshooter; while the discovery of the fact that they were officers would sharpen the eyesight of the lurking foe and make his aim truer.

The danger of their movements was increased by a slight mist which covered the country, and made even close objects indistinct and blurred. When the mist became less dense they suddenly saw through it a redoubt that was crowded with Bulgarian soldiers. The enemy, who were in overwhelming numbers, saw the General and his party before the latter had time to take cover. Their sole refuge was then in flight, but before they could turn explosions shook the redoubt, echoing among the hills, and a tempest of rifle bullets whistled around and over the Commander-in-Chief and his staff. Strangely, however —and it was probably owing to the slight but welcome cover of the mist—this terrible fire at almost revolver range caused little injury to any of the Turks, and before the astonished Bulgarians could jerk back the bolts of their rifles, Mahmoud and his staff were galloping away at breakneck speed, along the road down which a moment before they had ridden so cheerfully.

Bang! bang! bang! went the enemy's rifles, and the General's horse toppled over, falling on the un-

fortunate Pasha, and pinning him effectually to the earth.

A heavy well-aimed fire was then poured into the party, and the remainder of the mounted staff-officers went down, some of them having had their horses shot, while others had been wounded so badly that they could no longer retain their seats upon their now terrified chargers.

Despite the deadly fire, Eyut, an orderly, helped his gallant leader to extricate himself from beneath his horse, and then carried the Pasha on his back to the comparative safety afforded by a bend in the roadway. Placing the wounded man gently, and in a comfortable position on the ground, Eyut, at the risk of his life, returned with another orderly in face of the enemy's bullets, which were now directed at them, to the redoubt to rescue another wounded officer, Salahadin Bey. The other stricken Turks, Kemil, Kanzem, and Haran Bey, were but slightly wounded, and were able to drag themselves back to safety. All the horses were shot, and the two orderlies were compelled to carry Salahadin, and to help the remaining three. No one was hit, but unfortunately no horses were to be had, and Eyut had to carry Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha the whole way back to the rear, a distance of about two miles, which feat he accomplished without mishap. Major Von Hahwachter, a German officer serving on the staff, had a narrow escape, a bullet passing through his fez. If it had been two inches lower he would have been a dead man.

With great difficulty they managed to reach a Turkish post, where a conveyance for the wounded General was found after some trouble. In this crude springless vehicle the Pasha was driven to Fort Kura Kyak, a distance of four miles. The roads were not of the best, and the jolting of the cart must have been frightful. The agonies he endured must have been almost intolerable.

Still suffering intense pain, the Commander-in-Chief was forwarded to Hadem Keui by automobile, and from thence by train to Constantinople. The narrative reads almost like romance. Eyut, who effected these heroic rescues, performed deeds which, even in these days of magazine rifles and machine guns, make war glorious. Had he been in the service of England instead of that of the Porte, his reward would probably have been a Victoria Cross.

Happily all these men are on the road to recovery, and by the time this book has been published they will be on their feet again, although Salahadin when first brought in was believed to be dead.

When taken to the German hospital, Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha said that he hoped to be in command of his men again in a month's time.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RAVAGES OF CHOLERA AMONG THE TURKS

THE difficulties and complications which were increasing for the Turkish army were rendered still more serious by the outbreak of cholera. Not only had it to be contended with on the lines of communication but also behind the fortifications at Tchatalja, and it extended even to Constantinople. This fell disease accounted for two thousand victims a day.

Owing to the hardy constitution and temperate habits of the Turks many of them recovered from it, and were enabled to return afterwards to the lines.

To give readers some idea of the nervousness which the scourge excited in men's minds, I may mention that at the Pera Club there sat one silent man, a doctor, who had that morning been at his station attending hundreds of patients as they arrived by train.

"I have been disinfected," he said, "and one needs to be, working amongst this class of patients."

The doctor was a well-known Englishman, and I discussed with him the reports which were flying about with reference to the inadequate medical attendance at many of the military hospitals.

Incidentally he invited me to drive with him to

one of the hospitals near the end of the Golden Horn. He said I could then form my own opinions as to whether the reports had been exaggerated or not. Accepting the invitation, we proceeded to the hospital, and I am glad to be able to testify that I found the patients were being well attended to by a full staff of Turkish military doctors, and that everything was being done to meet the requirements of the wounded and dead. I was convinced therefore that many of the rumours which had been circulated were without any foundation.

While referring to the ravages of cholera, I may also recall the fact that in company with my friend Bennett I paid a visit to Stamboul, with the object of seeing how the wounded and cholera cases were being treated on their arrival there.

On our way to the city, which we reached by way of the ferry from Galata, we saw striking evidences of the results of the panic-stricken retreat from Thrace and the surrounding country.

Vast numbers of refugees were pouring into the city, to seek behind the Tchatalja lines an asylum free from the dread of the oncoming Bulgarian army. These huge migratory hordes included starving and disorganised soldiery, panic-stricken peasants, and merchants from the larger towns. Many of them, while passing through in their headlong flight, must have come in contact with the great and ever-increasing cholera camps and become more or less infected with this dread pestilence, which caused the mosques

to be overcrowded with cases. These sacred edifices were frequently used as hospitals, and as places of shelter for the wounded as well from the ravages of the wintry climate.

As there appears to be no little curiosity with reference to cholera and its intimidating effect upon the people of the countries in which outbreaks occur, it may be of interest to explain that, although it is so much dreaded by those who are brought first in contact with it, the feeling gradually dies away, the prevailing impression being that everybody but the individual himself might fall a victim to it.

As an illustration of this fact I might mention that a party of correspondents would sit round a table discussing the war generally, and when the outbreaks of cholera were referred to it appeared that some of them had just returned from San Stefano, where the cholera hospitals were situated.

One of them said that he had reached San Stefano, which is a suburb of Constantinople, on a stifling summer day. Where the children used to play, in a large open space, the dead, dying, and sick were lying. Occasionally there was to be seen among them a squirming movement as the pangs of cholera gripped and twisted the muscles of the bodies with cramp. A grey drawn face of a man would be momentarily exposed, to indicate the fact that life was ebbing out of him.

Sad to relate, the correspondent, who represented a German paper, and gave me the particulars of his

visit, died from cholera himself twenty-four hours after his return to camp.

When I look back and consider the risks we all ran, it seems marvellous to me that more did not take the infection. It appeared then to be scarcely possible that any could escape from it. As a matter of fact many of the correspondents, including myself, had a mild attack somewhat resembling cholera, but we recovered from it after a few days.

The contempt for death exhibited by my colleagues could not fail to excite my admiration. I have seen them riding forth daily to what seemed likely to be certain death as cheerfully as if they were going on some pleasure excursion.

CHAPTER XVII

REFUGEES CAMPED IN STAMBOUL

TAKING advantage of an interval in the fighting at Tchatalja, Bennett and I agreed to explore the ancient walls and the celebrated water-systems of Stamboul. Passing over from Galata by the ferry, we screwed our way through the living wall of refugees—a long perspective of gaunt hungry men and women, packed among waggons and vehicles of every kind. Here and there was a thicket of cattle-horns, while mules and horses in every conceivable attitude gave characteristic features to this extraordinary mass.

Our object was to reach the railway station, but as we tried to walk along the pavement every step revealed prostrate forms, some dead, many writhing and moaning in dying agonies, amidst unspeakable filth and exhalations which polluted and contaminated the atmosphere. Underfoot were puddles of slush, in many places knee-deep, breeding fatal bacteria, which made the street impassable save in certain places where the rough paving-stones formed a doubtful causeway. At such places you had to reckon with animals, who disputed your passage most effectively with their horns.

In this short journey of not more than a couple of hundred yards we lost one another completely.

I looked in vain for Bennett's genial smile among that crowd of troubled faces. Opposite the restaurant families were camped, some in waggons, others in an offensive mixture of mud and decaying matter which covered the street. When we met again afterwards we went by devious ways to a restaurant which was situated near the railway station. The gate of the front entrance was barred and further secured by wire.

At first the house seemed to be unoccupied, and the tables and benches in the garden were entirely deserted. Through the window we saw and were seen by the proprietor, who came out, opened the gate, which he carefully secured behind us, and explained to us his fear that the sight of food might prove too strong for the crowds outside and tempt them to break into the restaurant. The blinds were drawn down, so as to conceal us from the hungry eyes of the famishing mob. The same precautions were observed in showing us out. This was accomplished by taking us through the kitchens and out by the back door.

We had intended visiting the celebrated underground water-cisterns, but this we found to be impossible that day on account of the heavy rain. We therefore worked our way back to the ferry, and the invigorating breezes of the Bosphorus cleared our lungs of the foul pestilential air of Stamboul.

This dark and dismal picture of human misery, reaching down to the lowest depths, will never be

erased from my mind. That these terrible scenes and experiences did not produce serious outbreaks and inroads upon private property, proved the respect which the Turks have for law and order, and for the philosophy with which they regard calamities. What impressed me more than anything else was the display of human sympathy and the charity shown by them to their more unfortunate fellow-countrymen, even when they were Christians. The spontaneous timely help given by people who were themselves badly off was worth more than organised systems of charity.

Somehow or other the refugees were fed and assisted to the greatest possible extent. There was no railing against circumstances, and no impious blasphemies. Surely the savour of that piteous, patient endurance, bowing low to the will of the Almighty, was a silent prayer wafted heavenward to the steps of the throne of the God of Justice and Mercy.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TCHATALJA LINES OF DEFENCE

THE great centre of interest in the campaign was the determined struggle at Tchatalja, where Turkey made her last stand behind the formidable lines which are a monument to British genius and talent. They were designed by the late Baker Pasha.

The position is naturally strong, as a range of rolling hills dominate the intervening plain. Generally speaking, the Bulgarian army occupied the mountains *vis-à-vis*. The lines were further strengthened from the sea. At Biyuk Chekmeje, the guns of the battleships had a range of five to six miles, thus protecting the Turkish left. A lake and a morass added to the difficulties of the attack from this point. The right was equally barred by large, shallow lagoons running behind the forts to Hadem Keui, Nazim Pasha's headquarters.

It will be seen on studying the map that the valley of Kara Su opens out towards the north-east. Consequently the enemy could not find any good gun positions, and, moreover, the whole ground was open and well within the range of the Turkish guns.

The Ottomans were hard at work on advanced positions which ought to render the passage of the valley practically impossible. From Yenikeni on

the Black Sea to Azditch Tabja the country is broken and wooded. This is to the advantage of the Bulgarians. There is a stream of some importance running to the Biyuk Chekmeje Causeway. On the shoulders of the hills behind, the Bulgarians placed their artillery, beyond the range of the Turkish guns, and effectually protected from the fire of the ships lying out in the Bay. There were also small villages which were occupied by the Bulgarian troops.

A long slope running from the village of Tchatalja provided a perfect artillery position. Behind this three hundred thousand men could lie concealed in perfect safety. The Turkish position of the lines at Baghchetch Tabja was exposed to a concentrated fire. It was important, as it lay on the railway, which here takes a sharp curve.

The chart will enable my readers to clearly grasp the situation and to follow the trend of events. The first feature that strikes the observer is the line of forts or redoubts extending from Lake Biyuk Chekmeje on the left wing to Dirkos Lake, which is separated from the Black Sea by a narrow strip of sand.

The strength of the position can be seen at a glance. Nature itself could hardly have formed a stronger barrier. It is the landward key of Constantinople. Generally the ground slopes down to a valley through a stream, the Kara Su, which meanders onward and empties itself into the Lake Biyuk Chekmeje.

The only chance for the enemy to succeed was

to force the Turkish centre. For ten miles a line of redoubts covered each other, while rifle-pits and wire-netting presented an impassable barrier. A hundred and fifty thousand soldiers under Nazim Pasha manned these works and defences before the peace negotiations were commenced. The Bulgarian guns had been previously searching them, and a big battle had been expected at any time. The Turkish army had been completely reorganised, and bread and provisions of all kinds were plentiful. When I was there the men seemed quite happy and cheerful, singing and making merry notwithstanding the terrible experiences they had previously undergone. It is a striking fact that Turkey's weakness is also her strength. The recuperative power and spirit of the nation is little short of marvellous. Kismet—the watchword of the Islam world—does more for her army than the most systematised methods and organisation of the highly equipped forces of the big European Powers.

I am not advocating the adoption of happy-go-lucky methods, but I am convinced that with the benefit of a few years' rest and training they would be capable of doing anything.

All correspondents had been ordered to proceed to Constantinople, but the order was obeyed in the spirit, and not strictly in the letter.

Several of them temporarily pitched their camps at Biyuk Chekmeje, and from the hills at the back of the village a fine view of any fighting could be seen.

The operations were often suspended or stopped entirely owing to the thick sea-mists which rolled in from the Sea of Marmora and enveloped the valleys.

In addition to riding or motoring, one could hire a tug-boat at a most exorbitant price and cross to Rodosto on the Marmora, and watch at leisure the battleships firing on the Bulgarian position.

Beyond Biyuk Chekmeje the more enterprising representatives of the press were continually being stopped whilst endeavouring to get past the line of sentries. In some cases they were held up, at the point of the bayonet, until the officer of the guard had been communicated with. Genial smiles, coffee, and cigarettes ended what might otherwise have been serious affairs.

From the opposite side of the lake the Bulgarians commenced a tremendous artillery fire, on 18th October, on the Ottoman defences, to which Nazim Pasha gallantly replied. The big guns of the ships could be heard above the general din, which echoed even in the streets of Constantinople.

For forty-eight hours the fight lasted, but the assault was finally repulsed, the Ottomans even driving the Bulgarians out of their trenches. We could afterwards see numbers of the enemy's dead lying about. This victory marked the turning of the tide. It gave confidence to Nazim's army. If Europe kept the ring, it was believed that after all the Turks would have a sporting chance of rolling back the invaders.

Nazim Pasha and Staff

A

CHAPTER XIX

THE BATTLE OF TCHATALJA

THE route from Fort Gjaur Bajür along the line to Derkos was enveloped in smoke and flame. The Bulgarian forces were pressing a heavy attack on Nazim's centre, and the fate of Constantinople hung in the balance. Shrapnel shells were bursting high overhead, and the big common shell dug up the ground round the base of the fortresses. The attack commenced with a heavy rifle and Maxim fire. The continuous shots from the rifles sounded like the crackling of a fire of dry wood, while in addition there was the tut! tut! tut! of the Maxims marking time.

The battle of Tchatalja had begun. The enemy had been feeling his way with a good deal of independent firing and an occasional salvo of artillery. The steady roar of the guns which covered the advance and pounded the Turkish forts made it impossible to communicate except by signals. The whole air was filled with the sounds of battle, and the passage of the big shells cut the atmosphere like the crashing of a railway train through a tunnel. Mingled with these crashes were the weird shrieks and the prolonged screams and howls of the smaller shells. The awful din went on with little intermission for two days and nights. The scene resembled

that of an Inferno, while the strong bars of light from the projector of the fort showed the eddying smoke torn by the passage of missiles. The deadly shrapnel burst like venomous curved arrows of flame, shrouded by smoke of a dull orange colour.

All day the wounded came in—some crawling, and some being supported by comrades. Horsemen rode practically across the deadly zone, and, wonderful to relate, got through without many casualties, although at times it seemed to me as if a fly could not have lived amongst that hurricane of missiles.

I took advantage of the lulls to jump up and take a rapid glance of the battle-field. This was not by any means safe, owing to the bursting of the shells. Many of them did not burst, but scooped a long trench in the soft ground. I noticed one man with blood trickling down his cheeks from a wound in the temple. I do not think that he was even aware of his injury.

One thing was very noticeable, and that was the bobbing up of heads—a very natural movement, but quite useless as a precaution.

You heard a quick whistle, a sort of savage whisper as the bullet sped by. There was always a feeling of nervousness. I experienced it at first, but this passed off as excitement and enthusiasm blazed in your heart. At times, indeed, one revelled in it. There was a companionship in it which is indescribable.

Comrades! what a world of meaning it conveys

to men in such thrilling circumstances. Every soldier seems to be like a brother. Your blood thrills through your pulses with mad excitement. Surely there is nothing more awe-inspiring or more terrible than war.

It cannot be doubted that the Bulgarians are a very courageous race of men, and they were all heroes that day. Cannon to the right of them, cannon in front of them volleyed and thundered. At one time it appeared as if they would win some of the Turkish positions. But the steady, well-directed fire of the Ottoman guns first checked and finally dispersed them. They had shot their bolt, and they retired behind the shelter of their own batteries.

What lives it must have cost them! We shall probably never know what terrible losses they sustained at Tchatalja, but I should think that at least one-fourth of that magnificent attacking force were placed *hors de combat.*

CHAPTER XX

BETWEEN CONSTANTINOPLE AND HADEM KEUI

On my return to Constantinople from the lines at Tchatalja the air seemed lighter, and a general sense of relief pervaded the city. The windows of our club overlooked the garden of the American Embassy, where "Jack" was having the time of his life.

I treasure happy memories of the hospitalities I received at the club, which was perhaps the most cosmopolitan in the world. The members were of all nationalities, and they mingled together with the greatest good fellowship and harmony.

I call attention to the peculiar fact that we all seemed to gravitate to the tables specially used by our distinct nationalities—English, French, and German, the Americans and Englishmen generally fraternising together. The English table was a large one, but there always appeared to be room at it for one more, possibly owing to the fact that it was a circular table.

The cuisine was excellent and the menu was varied. Roumanian wine, white and red, adorned the centre of the table in small decanters, and was included with the lunch. A right merry party assembled every day, and all the news relating to the war was discussed in the interval.

There was naturally much sympathy with the Turks in their various misfortunes at the front, but no fears appeared to be entertained as to any massacre in the event of the Bulgarians achieving further victories

One disaster after another was reported. First Monastir fell, then the Greeks captured Salonica. The Dardanelles were even threatened.

Among those I met at the club was Lord Brooke, who has seen active service and who takes a keen practical interest in all military operations. He came out to Constantinople with the object, if possible, of becoming an extra military attaché, but as there was no available opportunity, he hired a tug-boat and visited several well-known ports in the Sea of Marmora which the enemy were endeavouring to capture.

He attempted to land at Rodoski, but, fortunately for him, his companions persuaded him to desist, for it was discovered that the Bulgarians were in possession. They afterwards set fire to the manufacturing part of the town. From the vessel he could easily see the battle in progress by the light of the bursting shells.

On one occasion he collected a party of six or eight with the object of visiting Derkos. The party consisted of Major North, H. Barber, "the aerial expert," Captain Bettleheim, Mr. Bennett and myself. We were in two motor cars, and Lord Brooke led the way, giving us instructions to follow close

at his heels Our auto was unable to keep up with the other car, and when we reached the gate we were promptly stopped by the officer in charge. He tried every argument and even threats to prevent us from proceeding, and we can only admit that he did his duty. Major North was terribly disappointed, as he was due to leave in a couple of days, and this was the only opportunity he had to visit the lines.

We turned the car round and drove to the War Office, where I obtained a special pass which acted as an open sesame.

We then passed through the gate, and proceeded for the first five miles at a snail's pace through multitudes of the most motley and picturesque refugees; they had been waiting there for some days until the crowds at Stamboul had been shipped off to Syria. In all the cemeteries that we passed, crowds were camped among the gravestones, sheltered by the melancholy cyprus. Tombstones were put to all manner of uses. The place looked almost like a fair-ground, and pedlars and petty traders did a fine business in disposing of provisions. A man was there selling bread, and another was vending vegetables. The water merchants were also very busy.

The wells along the road were few and far between, and were always crowded. In some cases people had spent all their energy in crawling to the water, but they had not sufficient strength left to draw

it when they reached it. There were also wounded soldiers, trains of pack animals going and returning, and buffalo carts led by strange-looking men and women in costumes which might have illustrated some of the stories in the *Arabian Nights*.

At last we seemed to have a fairly clear run. The long weary procession was breaking up into detached groups. I wish some of my motoring friends could have seen the road along which we were running. In places there was a new layer of sharp stones admirably suited for tyre puncturing; there was another section which resembled the furrows of a field. The lively motor danced and jumped about until we arrived within a thousand yards of the railway station.

A picturesque Turkish bridge spanned a creek, and as something went wrong with the car, we came to a dead halt. It was a bad prospect for our Derkos expedition, for we still had to cover twenty miles.

The chauffeur and part owner of the car positively refused to go farther, and, on examination, it appeared that the defective part of the car had been broken before, and, like most Turkish repairs of the kind, it had been hastily and temporarily mended with wire.

We all admitted that we made sorry figures sitting on the road-side with a dismantled car. But we were encouraged by a happy thought. Why not use the interval in preparing and taking lunch?

Old Tokatlian had carefully provided for us bread, butter, cheese, cold meats and fruit, with a couple of bottles of red Roumanian.

During lunch we heard the sound of an engine somewhere. Barber said at once, "That's a Gnome engine," and we followed the sound eagerly. As we proceeded the ground suddenly dipped, and we came suddenly upon a garage.

A Bristol aeroplane was outside ready for flight, while there were several more in the garage. The aeroplane men welcomed us very cordially, and were overjoyed when they knew the qualifications of Mr. Barber. He looked over the "Bristol" outside, and pointed out one or two trifling defects, which he said he could put right in a couple of hours. I made a sketch of him seated at the steerage wheel, but no ascent was possible because one of the cylinders required repacking, and the wings were slightly damaged.

They offered us anything in the way of material or tools that we required to repair the car. The lateness of the day prevented us from making our intended journey. If, as the chauffeur said, we could only get back to Constantinople we should be quite satisfied.

We afterwards reached Pera in our car without any incident or trouble.

CHAPTER XXI

CONSTANTINOPLE AND ADRIANOPLE

THE increasing rumours emanating from Stamboul, with reference to the feeling of the Moslems against the Christians, caused the Powers to take the precaution of landing detachments of sailors from the various ships to guard their Embassies.

The United States Government had invited the British authorities to look after their Embassy, and to protect their officers as well as the American residents in the event of their being placed in jeopardy.

The American officials exerted themselves to make the British bluejackets thoroughly at home. They placed their lawn-tennis ground at their disposal, and very soon it was converted into a football field.

A few steps from the asphalted lawn-tennis court led into a beautiful garden, tastefully laid out with a rich variety of flowers. In great contrast to the parterres, the sailors' rifles were piled on the paths, and the sentries were marching up and down ready at any moment to give the alarm should the emergency arise.

It was interesting to note the splendid arrangements made to communicate with the ships lying in the Bosphorus. At the end of the garden was

a species of pavilion, from the window of which they could communicate with the signalman as he stood on the roof of the British Embassy about a quarter of a mile distant.

The British Embassy was thus easily converted into a means of communication between the American Embassy and the British ships in the harbour. There was a larger force of officers and men in the British Embassy than in the United States official building, and, when passing the gate of the British Embassy, Jack could be seen whiling away his time either with football, rackets, or in short drills.

The dignified habitues of that aristocratic centre of the city sometimes condescended to stop at the gates of the Embassy to watch, and perhaps to admire, the infectious liveliness of the British tars at play.

The other foreign Embassies were guarded in a like manner by landing-parties from their own ships.

I visited the sailors' quarters and found that they lived in the kitchen at the American Embassy, and in outside buildings, sleeping in their clothes on the floor. As the marble flooring was too cold and hard for such purposes, it had been covered with boards. The officer in charge took me over his quarters in the guard-room. They consisted of a wash-house and a small space about the size of an ordinary ship's cabin. The officer slept on the floor, and the bugler slept on a raised bench near at hand,

and, in case of a sudden alarm, the warning call could be sounded immediately. On one occasion there was a false alarm, and in one minute and a half the whole guard were under arms and in the street, only to find that they had been called out for an insignificant reason.

I have been told that the British sailors, when they disembarked at Galata, used the stratagem of landing their Maxims in the guise of patients lying in cots, and thus added to the feeling of security of everybody concerned. Their appearance added greatly to the life and interest of the streets of Pera, and wherever they went they were well received by the Turks.

As Constantinople is almost certain to figure prominently in the operations which have been renewed as the result of the breakdown of the peace negotiations in London, it may be of interest to readers to give them some idea of that famous city.

The capital is situated on a promontory which is studded with seven low hills, and is surrounded on the north by the Golden Horn, on the east by the Bosphorus, and on the south by the Sea of Marmora.

On the north side of the Golden Horn lie the suburbs of Galata, Pera, Tophane, Kasim Pasha, &c. Scutari and Kadiköi, which may also be regarded as suburbs, are on the Asiatic coast east of the Bosphorus. The suburb of Sweet Waters, which,

with its beautiful meadow valleys, is a favourite resort for the Turkish women on Fridays, is situated at the northern end of the Golden Horn where the inlet narrows.

Near it is the summer palace of the Sultan, while the suburb of Eyub, which is also on the north side of the Golden Horn, and is called after the Lieutenant of the Prophet, contains a sacred mosque, in which is preserved the sword of Osman, the founder of the Empire of the Osmanli or Ottoman Turks. It is with this sword that each Sultan invests himself on his accession to the throne, the ceremony being equivalent to the coronation of other sovereigns.

The European ambassadors reside in the summer in palatial buildings running along the European shore of the Bosphorus. The British Embassy is situated on a most picturesque site amid well-wooded grounds rising up from the sea.

Constantinople proper is surrounded by walls, the Theodosian walls on the land side forming a triple circumvallation. Of the twenty-nine gates the most remarkable one is the Top-Kapussi or Cannon Gate. The most famous of the public squares is the At-Meidan or Square of the Horses.

Among the many mosques the most important is that of St. Sophia, one of the finest works of Byzantine art. It was built by Justinian on the site of a church erected by Constantine the Great, after whom Constantinople is named, and dedicated to "Eternal Wisdom." Its fine columns, lavish decorations, and

beautiful mosaics give it an appearance of rich magnificence. It has a most impressive effect on all who visit it.

Altogether there are 800 mosques in the city, of which formerly twenty were Christian churches. There is a Bulgarian as well as a Greek cathedral in the city. The principal palace is the old Serai, which occupies the whole of the south-east point of Constantinople, and is flanked by a crenellated turreted wall.

It is the unique situation of the city which makes it the principal mart of the Levant, and it has the further advantage that it is connected by rail, via Belgrade and Sofia, with the central European railway system.

It may not be generally known that conscription has obtained in Turkey since 1880. The total period of the service is from twenty to forty years of age. The army is divided into seven army corps, and in time of war, as at present, a million men can be put in the field

Notwithstanding the more or less serious reverses sustained by the Turks, it will thus be seen that the Sublime Porte can call upon immense reserves if it has to fight for its very existence as a European Power.

With soldiers who have been justly famed for their great military qualities, there can be little doubt that, with skilful generals and properly organised and efficient transport and commissariat

arrangements, they could prolong the war to a very considerable extent, especially if they had more time to remedy the serious defects which have been discovered in the working of their military system.

Adrianople is of only secondary interest and importance in the eyes of the Turks to Constantinople, and the Bulgarians and Servians have been making desperate efforts to capture the city. The main interest of Adrianople is derived from the fact that it contains famous mosques, including that which was built by the Sultan Selim II. Other features of great interest are the Serai, or palace, and the bridge Michael, built by Byzantine Emperors, and a large bazaar.

The name of the city dates from the second century, when the Emperor Hadrian enlarged and beautified the town, which has been called after his name. It was the capital of the Ottoman Empire until 1453, before Constantinople had been captured by the Turks. It was occupied by the Russians in 1829, and it was there, in September 1st of that year, that the treaty of Adrianople was signed which concluded the war between Russia and Turkey. The town was also besieged by the Russians in the war of 1877.

Situated in a flat country where three rivers meet —the Maritza, the Tunja, and the Arda—it can be easily understood how seriously the rising of the rivers might have hampered the hemming in of the fortress by the Bulgarians and the Servians.

The strongest defences are those on the left bank of the Maritza, but the hills to the east and north-east of the town are also crowned with substantial works.

The difficulties of the Allies have been increased by the fact that all the roads converge upon the town, and that there are practically no lateral routes to assist their army. Notwithstanding this fact, many of the Turkish outworks have been reduced to heaps of ruins, and the Bulgarians secured other successes which gave rise to unfounded reports of the capture of the city. There can be little doubt that the Servians who relieved the Bulgarians in the siege, drew closer and closer to the city, and that the original garrison was very largely reduced.

In such tragic circumstances the final fate of Adrianople naturally provided abundant food for speculation and reflection in international circles. True to their military instincts and regulations, the Turks made a heroic defence, which, in many respects, reminds students of the history of their indomitable defence of Plevna.

CHAPTER XXII

SOME DISTINGUISHED YOUNG TURKS

No book dealing with the position and fortunes of the Ottoman forces could be considered to be complete which did not refer to the most daring leaders in the Young Turk party. Among those who have figured most prominently in the evolution of events preceding and following the first portion of the war with the Allies, which led up to the Peace Conference in London, is Neshet Bey.

This gallant General defended Tripoli against the Italians, until the increasing difficulties and the imminence of the outbreak of war in the Balkans compelled the Porte to conclude peace with the Italians. He then returned to Constantinople with his brave and distinguished staff of officers, and they have had to be reckoned with in later struggles. Although small in numbers, they represent an important and inspiriting element in the protection of the country.

Other distinguished officers are Fethi Bey, the able chief of the staff to Neshet Bey, Ismail Hakki, Tahar Bey, and Djoe Bey.

Perhaps, however, the most conspicuous of the Young Turks is Enver Bey, who has become a popular leader, and deservedly so. A dashing soldier,

his name rings from one end of Turkey to the other. Bold and resourceful, a *beau sabreur*, he has revelled in brave deeds and heroic exploits in the defence of his country. He has therefore become the theme of song and story in the Islam world.

On the walls of the Café of Stamboul two portraits are conspicuous—the Sultan and Enver Bey. Unfortunately I did not have the pleasure of meeting Enver when in Tripoli, but I was nevertheless well acquainted with his brother Hallal, the gallant defender of Khoms.

When stopping at Azizia, General Neshet was in constant communication with Enver Bey, and he was loud in his praises of his subordinate who defended Dherna in Tripoli against tremendous odds. He it was who trained the Arabs in the art of modern warfare, leading them in person against Italian armies numerically superior to the Turks and Arabs. Time and again, and always with success, he met the enemy and proved that they were not so formidable as many people had supposed.

This is the man who was considered to be capable of extricating Turkey from her later difficulties, for he knows no fear, and it is generally believed that he will never make peace on dishonourable terms.

Enver Bey's efforts and aspirations are, very naturally, discounted and derided at Sofia, but I should like to hear Enver's version before deciding with regard to their intrinsic merit.

Many experts were of the opinion that Turkey's

best plan was to maintain the defensive, and to wait for the chance of the Balkan League coming to grief in the attempt to settle their disputes with reference to the division of the captured territory, or for the interposition of one or more of the great European Powers.

At any rate it was the general feeling among the Moslems, and especially among the Young Turks, that Turkey as a nation must fight the quarrel to the bitter end, and, after all, she was the best judge of her own affairs. If both sides were bluffing, so much the better for the Turks, who naturally wanted to save as much as possible out of the wreck.

A European war had of course to be avoided. The Powers were doing all in their power to prevent such a terrible catastrophe, but if it eventuated, it could not with any reason or justice be laid at the door of the Turk. A "legitimate ending" of the war was called for, but the question was, "What is meant by the expression 'legitimate'?"

And a question closely linked with this, as well as other wars that may take place in the near future, is with reference to the policy to be adopted by the opposing military authorities in regard to the admission of war artists and correspondents to the zone of operations.

The presence of knights of the pencil and of members of the Fourth Estate in the field of warfare has become one of the most difficult problems for the generals in command to solve. In times

past the profession of the war artist and correspondent was confined practically to the trained craftsmen connected with the Press, and on the whole the public and the newspapers, illustrated and otherwise, were served admirably.

But nowadays there is a somewhat regrettable tendency to permit men of means and of good social position, who are not compelled to do the work for the sake of the salaries or remuneration which would otherwise be paid for it, to come into competition with the professional artist and correspondent, and to handicap them in their difficult occupation in such a manner as to place them altogether at a disadvantage.

CHAPTER XXIII

AEROPLANES IN WAR

Two new factors in warfare have arisen within the last few years—airships and wireless telegraphy—and they must be taken into serious account in future. In the old days the battle areas were measured by their length and breadth, but now that airships have been brought into practical use as despatch-carriers and scouts, and even for attacking purposes as bomb-throwers, the field of operations has been extended in directions not hitherto anticipated even by the most successful generals.

The value of aeroplanes has been proved both in Tripoli and in the Balkans.

The boldest pilots of airships and of dirigibles will play most prominent parts in future wars. In some countries aerial craft are becoming almost common objects, and only those which provide for themselves well-trained bodies of experienced airmen will fully reap the great value of such a service.

The island nations have always produced the best sailors, and it is obvious that those which encourage their people in the manufacture and manipulation of aerial machines are bound, by the logic of events, not only to effect the conquest of the air, but also to secure leading positions among the great Powers.

France and Germany have been spending many hundreds of thousands of pounds in providing themselves with aerial machines of different kinds, and it is a regrettable fact that we have allowed our great neighbours to get several years' start of us. The result is that they have fleets of aeroplanes and dirigibles with which we cannot possibly compete, and that they have a far larger number of experienced and skilful flying men than we can call upon in times of need.

The faith of military experts in the use of aircraft in warfare has been increasing rapidly. Even Moltke, the great organiser of victory in the Franco-German War of 1870, believed strongly in their great future utility. But notwithstanding the enterprise shown since by Continental Powers in developing this new force, this country unaccountably still lags behind in the competition.

The erroneous view seems to be entertained in this country that airships can be built and used at short notice and at any time, and the Government appears to be more inclined to wait until these vessels have been proved to be thoroughly effective than to follow the example of other Powers in training airmen in their use in times of peace.

It was the same policy of fatal procrastination and lack of preparation that produced such serious results for us in the first stage of the war in South Africa, and although the daring and enterprising spirit of the British race is still exemplified in the

splendid work which has been done by airmen in this country as individuals, the lack of official financial support and encouragement for the development of flying must, sooner or later, I am afraid, have serious consequences. It is true that the military authorities have been doing more in the last eighteen months than in previous years to encourage aviation, but when comparison is made between them and foreign competitors it is not possible, with every desire to think that all is well with our own country, to live in a fools' paradise, or to hide our heads in the sand, when formidable aerial fleets are being organised and trained with such efficiency for future use by rival Powers.

The great progress achieved by makers of monoplanes has brought that particular kind of air-craft largely to the front, especially since Blériot made his sensational flight with it across the English Channel to Dover. The fact that there have been so many fatalities to airmen has been advanced to prove not only that airships are impracticable for military or naval purposes, but that even if reliable vessels were built, the weapons now used by the land and sea forces of the great Powers would destroy them.

It should be remembered, however, that during the last seven years aeroplanes have been made with motors giving them a speed of over sixty miles an hour, while their range of action has been extended to about a thousand miles. With a rapid improvement which has amazed everybody, who can tell

what future developments such air-craft will make during the next few years. Many of the dangers and difficulties arising from defects in the machines have been minimised by improvements, and there is now a large and increasing balance of opinion in favour of airships being made practical and even invaluable in warfare.

Disasters in the future as in the past must be expected, but no one who has studied the use that has already been made of air-craft in campaigns can doubt their great utility and increasing importance. The fact alone that, as compared with battleships, the cost of airships is comparatively small, should have a considerable effect in encouraging their construction and use in military and naval operations.

The ability of the monoplane to ascend to great heights considerably diminishes the danger of rifle-fire against it as a rapidly moving object. It is only when there are motor troubles, or there are other reasons for the loss of ascensive power, that such air-craft are liable to be destroyed, or crippled, or captured.

The greatest danger, of course, arises from the use of long-range artillery against airships, but it should be remembered that although the projectiles can easily be made to travel the required distance, it is quite another matter to reach them when flying at such a great pace, even with high-angle fire and constant changes of vertical and horizontal direction. The same difficulties would apply to naval vessels

near land, for they could not use their big guns against air-craft unless they sighted them far out at sea. Airship pilots know quite well that if they can work to landward, even if they are over a naval base, the guns of the fleet could not be used against them without fear of the projectiles and shells dropping on the harbour works and stores, or on the town and its buildings. The use of fort guns against air-craft must also be circumscribed by the fear of doing injury to the fleet.

The time has obviously therefore come when ships of the air must be accepted as a recognised force for offensive and defensive purposes. The great Powers would not have entered upon large programmes of airship construction had they not fully recognised their vital necessity in the future. With such quick developments and improvements as are possible in their construction, they may be expected to become absolutely essential in times of war.

We cannot afford therefore, in the words of Sir Hiram Maxim, to hide our heads in the sand like the ostrich in order not to witness what is going on in other parts of the world. On the contrary, we should accept the situation as we find it. The flying-machine has come, and come to stay, whether we like it or not.

It is for these reasons that I have devoted some space to the consideration of this important subject. I have described in the first portion of this work the use which was made of airships by the Italians in Tripoli.

With regard to the war in the Balkans, less use was made of the air-craft than in Tripoli. The Turks, however, appeared to find them very useful in locating the positions and movements of the Allies at the Tchatalja lines.

Perhaps the most striking incident that came to my knowledge was that connected with the success of a Turkish gunner, who, aiming at a Bulgarian aeroplane, the pilot of which was taking observations over the beleaguered city of Adrianople, brought it to earth amid the rousing cheers of the Ottomans, with the result that the machine was destroyed and the airman was killed on the spot.

The Bulgarians seemed to utilise the new ships of the air more extensively and effectively than the Turks, and by this means they were frequently able to discover the Ottoman movements and spy out the weakness of their lines of defence.

In my opinion the neglect of organising a fleet of aeroplanes on the part of the Turks placed them at a great disadvantage in the war, and convinced me that no nation, large or small, can afford to ignore the tremendous advantage which the advance of science and the progress made in the conquest of the air gives to that Power or State which provides itself with a well-organised and efficient service, in which monoplanes, biplanes, or dirigibles can play a most useful part.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MISUNDERSTOOD TURK

My experiences during the war have also convinced me that there has been a vast amount of misunderstanding and lack of appreciation with regard to the Turk. His peculiar characteristics will perhaps account for the extraordinary extent to which he has often been misrepresented. His fatalism, his philosophy, and his marvellous endurance under the most trying circumstances, as exhibited during the wars both in Tripoli and against the Allies, have rendered it very difficult to Western minds to fully comprehend his nature and disposition. He has his vices as well as his virtues, but, so far as I have been able to judge, his virtues largely outweigh his vices, which have undoubtedly been grossly exaggerated.

In a few words he may be described as brave, unselfish, hospitable, generous as well as pious, gentle and charitable; he is at the same time a gentleman in every sense of the word, and I am afraid that many advantages have been taken of him because of his possession of these remarkable characteristics.

It is because the Turks have been so greatly misrepresented that I venture to put before my readers a generous appreciation of him given by

a Servian gentleman, and it is only one of many similar expressions of opinion made in my hearing.

The gentleman to whom I refer used words which deserve to be recorded, as they appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the 29th of November, 1912. He wrote:

"We Servians are fighting against the Turks with all our might, but we do not wish to be unjust to them. I am perfectly certain that every Servian soldier, marching now victoriously through Macedonia and Albania, and every wounded Servian lying somewhere in a hospital, and every Servian mother, sister, wife, sweetheart, who has lost her son, or her brother, or her husband, or her lover, on one of the many bloody battlefields, would applaud my effort to do justice to our enemy. And, therefore, I do not hesitate to say a good word for the Turk. I do homage not to the Turk, but to the truth.

"An average Turk—or shall I, perhaps, call him a normal Turk?—is an excellent man. He believes in God, and prays to God more earnestly and more intensely than an average or normal Christian does. And he persistently and honestly tries to conform his everyday life to the commandments of his great Prophet. He is charitable, honest, trustworthy; he is modest, yet dignified; he is proud, but not vain; he is brave, but not boastful; he is sober, clean, polite; he is generally poor, but always hospitable; and he is patriotic, ready to starve and suffer and die, without a murmur, for his faith and the honour

of his country. But this excellent, virtuous, and God-fearing brave man is heavy, slow, and somewhat stupid, and in the electrical and aeroplanic twentieth century cannot stand against scientific organisations and quick-firing guns of the clever, sharp-witted Greeks, Servians, and Bulgars.

"The Turk was the master of the Balkan nations for nearly five centuries. During all those centuries he consistently refrained from interfering with our national churches and with our village municipal life. From the liberty which the Turk left to our Church and our municipal life in the country, our political liberty was re-born. But, notwithstanding his religious tolerance and his non-interference with our village life, we hated him as long as, and just because, he was our master. But now, when our victories have deprived him of his position as master of our countries, we will be pleased to have him for our friend, because—although he is not exactly a 'jolly' —he is certainly 'a good fellow.'"

Many attempts have been made to explain the diplomacy of Europe with regard to Turkey. The attitude of the Powers towards each other provides the explanation which is needed. Like Hal o' the Wynd, they have been all working for their own hand. It is because several of the Powers have their own axes to grind that they are so often prevented from acting in union, even when their great objective is to secure the retention of what has hitherto been described as the "Buffer of Europe."

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

HOW THE FOREIGN ATTACHÉS CROSSED THE FORD AT EUGENE RIVER

Some light on the unhappy position of the Moslems, so far as the European Powers are concerned, is provided by Ameer Ali, who, writing to the *Morning Post* on the subject, expressed himself in the following interesting and practical manner:

"When the history of this war, now entering upon a new phase, comes to be written in an atmosphere less charged with racial and religious prejudice, the tangle of dubious diplomacy which has landed a Moslem state in the direst straits will probably be unravelled.

"International ethics, I know, have undergone a great change within recent years, and the moral conscience of nations and individuals alike seems to have lost much of its sensitiveness. The atrocious savageries perpetrated on the Mussulman population of Macedonia are either treated with absolute indifference or passed by with the callous remark 'six of the one and half a dozen of the other'; and the tribulations of a brave nation, which in its time did vital service to England, only elicit jeers. The Turkish reply to the Note of the Powers, pathetic in its dignity, instead of rousing sympathy, only calls forth a scornful rebuke, that, having conceded so much, Turkey might yield up more, and forego the one point essential equally to her existence and her honour. There must be obliquity of moral vision somewhere to justify this frame of mind.

"The military collapse of Turkey has brought nearer the inevitable conflict between Teuton and Slav, and necessitates an immediate increase in the armies of

Central Europe. Were the Powers to damage Turkey equally in Asia, I greatly fear the first empire to suffer from it would be England. It would bring nearer the other inevitable conflict—that between Anglo-Saxon and Slav for Asiatic dominancy—and would also impose on England the necessity of adding immensely to her military and naval forces in Asia. Few people seem to realise what Russia has gained by the practical incorporation of Mongolia, 'the beehive of nations,' whence had issued the Huns and Tartars for the conquest of the Western world."

It was not possible to go through this campaign without hearing in various quarters the reports which had been circulated with regard to the massacre of Christians by the Turks. Personally, I cannot believe there was ever any substantial foundation for these rumours, and the inquiries I made did not induce me to change my opinions in regard to those allegations.

In this connection it will be of interest to quote the indignant protest made by the Ottoman Government "against the fabrications which, since the beginning of the war, have been finding their way into a certain portion of the European Press, alleging massacres, plunder, and arson in the Bulgarian, Servian, and Greek villages of European Turkey." It is declared in Turkish sources "that these inventions, concocted by the allied enemies of Turkey with a view to preparing an anti-Turkish atmosphere in the public opinion of Europe, are without any

foundation whatever. The Ottoman Government is therefore anxious to warn the British public not to attach any credence to them, and, as a proof of the criminal plans which are being prepared, the Porte publishes a telegram from the Vali of Adrianople, which states that Bulgarian Comitadjis, disguised as Turkish soldiers, are planning the massacre of the Macedonian villagers, in order that their crimes should be imputed to the Turkish troops, while another official telegram states that, after crossing the Turkish frontier near Markotchlar, the Bulgarians set fire, by means of bombs, to twelve villages, where they committed abominable acts.

"From an official Turkish source it is learned that the reports contained in telegrams from Sofia, announcing the bombardment of unfortified localities and the destruction of monasteries and private buildings at Varna, have not the least foundation. The official report from the naval Commander-in-Chief, which has reached the Ottoman Government, states that the fire from the Turkish fleet was not directed against private buildings or religious establishments, but against a distant point of the town where the enemy's torpedo-boats had taken refuge, and against those points where military movements were taking place."

CHAPTER XXV

EFFECTS OF ENVER BEY'S STRATEGY

SINCE my return from the Near East, the news received from it had not been very encouraging, so far as the Turks were concerned. If the telegrams were to be relied upon, the Porte, under its new régime, was recognising that it was scarcely possible to retrieve her disasters in the field.

But it was unsafe to place credence in anything except official reports, and it was particularly dangerous to believe reports of Ottoman disasters when they emanated from the enemy. The Turks laboured under a great disadvantage which did not affect the Allies. The reports and letters which constantly appeared in various journals came through the foreign post offices in Constantinople, and were evidently influenced by their opponents and those who sympathised with them. All news from the seat of war practically arrived therefore from the Balkans.

At the same time the position of the Sublime Porte was not really so desperate as many people imagined, notwithstanding her lack of preparedness for the war and her extremely unsatisfactory organisation and commissariat.

Adrianople, Skutari, and other besieged cities still held out, and the reports of immense casualty

lists had to be received *cum grano salis*. News emanating from Sofia came obviously from an untrustworthy source.

The numbers of alleged Turkish dead, wounded, and captured during the war would account for half the population of Turkey, and yet Turkey still seemed to be able to place armies in the field; and it was believed in some quarters that, if peace was not arranged in the meantime, Adrianople could hold out for a longer period. Last year's harvest was fairly bountiful, and it certainly would surprise me if a goodly portion of it was not still in the magazines of the city.

Since the return of Enver Bey, and his extraordinarily daring and successful coup in displacing Kiamil Pasha with the new Turk régime, there had been general expectations in the city and elsewhere in the country that he would attempt some bold and resourceful operation with the object of relieving the pressure on the Ottoman lines at Tchatalja, as well as improving the prospects of the Turkish forces generally.

These expectations were disappointed, although there can be little doubt that Enver Bey landed with many thousand troops at Eregli, to the east of Rodosto, on the Sea of Marmora.

The coast at this point is fairly well indented, and the land runs upwards from the sea into hills varying from 500 to 1000 feet high. The Bulgarians were in possession of Eregli, Rodosto, and Silivri, but

the Turkish fleet appear to have used their guns so effectively as to enable Enver Bey and his expeditionary force to land with the object of carrying out their operations. The plan was a most difficult as well as an extremely daring one, and it provided a further illustration of the genius of Enver Bey to strike at the enemy in an unexpected position, which, if successful, would have enabled him to cut the Bulgarians practically in half and to relieve the pressure on Tchatalja.

There were great possibilities in this large flanking movement if it could have been carried out with the skill which had characterised the preliminary operation. To deal with it effectually the Bulgarians found it necessary to withdraw a much larger force than Enver Bey's from the lines at Tchatalja than they could afford to spare if they were to hold the Ottoman troops there, and to prevent them moving forward with the object of co-operating with Enver Bey.

The activity of the Turks in this comparatively new sphere of operations clearly disconcerted the Allies, who had not been altogether prepared for the unexpected energy and strategy of their opponents.

It was not merely the landing at Eregli that had to be dealt with, for it appears that thousands of Turkish troops had also been disembarked at Rodosto, while reinforcements had been shipped for Gallipoli. A further force had been landed at Silivri.

The military situation therefore had been consider-

ably improved from the Turkish point of view, because if they could have maintained their hold upon these places they would have been able to make movements towards the railway and to cut off the Bulgarian lines of communication.

It had been reported that the Bulgarians had desired to draw the Turks out of their strong positions at Tchatalja, but the choice had not been left to them. Enver Bey had created for them a position of much anxiety, for instead of continuing the offensive against Tchatalja they were compelled to deal with these new forces.

These daring movements were, however, made a little too late. With my experience in Turkey during the campaign I can quite understand how the Ottoman forces were driven back. Some of the reasons for their lack of success I have described in earlier chapters. But I am compelled to pay my tribute of admiration to the skill and daring of Enver Bey, as exhibited at almost the eleventh hour, in thus striving to turn the tide of battle against the enemies of his country.

A determined effort was being made to save as much as possible from the wreck which at one time appeared to be overtaking the Turkish cause and to be depriving the Porte of such a large portion of her dominions.

It was Enver Bey's new operations that created the conviction that such a fine display of activity on the part of the Turks would enable them to

obtain better terms than they could possibly secure had not these fresh developments occurred.

In such an altered position of affairs the invitation which there is good reason to believe was made by Tewfik Pasha, on behalf of the Ottoman Government, to Sir Edward Grey, to invite the Great Powers to intervene to stop the war, has had a good effect.

I quite sympathise with the struggles that have been made by the Turkish delegates to prevent a peace settlement which would practically have the effect, if not actually, of driving them "bag and baggage out of Europe."

Should the Peace Conference be resumed there is no reason, in my opinion, why Turkey should not be granted terms to enable her to preserve her national self-respect.

When these important negotiations were set on foot in December, there was general hope that it might result either in a Christmas message of "Peace on Earth" between the belligerents, or at all events in a New Year's greeting to the same effect. Unfortunately these hopes were doomed to failure, for the resumption of the war has brought about the capture of Jannina by the Greeks.

So far as Enver Bey's expedition is concerned, it failed because he had not a sufficient force to carry it out effectively, and also for the reason that the Turkish army at Tchatalja was prevented by extensive flooding in front of their positions from advancing to co-operate with him. The terrible state

of the country for the same reason prevented any attempts being made to march to the relief of Adrianople.

A further factor in preventing the success of the expedition was the attempt made by the Allies to take the Turks in flank by landing on the Asiatic as well as on the European side of the Dardanelles, with the object of attacking the forts and so opening the way to Constantinople.

If Enver Bey's strategy failed, so also did that of the Allies in attempting to get at Constantinople from this direction, because the Turks hurried up reinforcements from Galipoli and other positions to defend the road to Constantinople.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CAPTURE OF JANNINA

THE capture of Jannina by the Greeks on March 6th — since the negotiations for peace in London were broken off — has been one of the most notable exploits in the war, and it was only natural that it should have created much enthusiasm and rejoicing throughout Greece.

The Allies have naturally been congratulated on their ability to wrest from the Porte a natural modern stronghold of the first importance, on the fortifications of which, on the authority of the Turkish Commander, Essad Pasha, over £1,000,000 has been spent.

The Turks have always proved themselves capable of defending their most essential positions to the extreme limit of endurance, and their tenacity, endurance, and bravery have again been proved in regard to Jannina. The fighting that took place on the terrible Bisani Hill of this Turkish fortress in Epirus was of the most desperate character. The fact that 25,000 shells were fired on two days at Jannina will illustrate the desperate efforts made by the Greeks to capture the town and fortress.

Jannina is said to have gained its name from its Christian founder. It was a Byzantine city until the year 1432, when Amurath II sent a summons

to the inhabitants demanding a speedy surrender, and warning them of the consequences of refusal. The terrified Christians at once submitted, and the Mahomedans took possession of it. Their first act was to raze some of the Christian churches to the ground, and their next was a deed in imitation of the Rape of the Sabines.

A body of armed men watched the return of the Christian congregation from the place of worship yet standing; each man seized upon the girl who best pleased him, as she issued from the porch, and the parents, after vain protestations, were compelled at length to assent to it. The women became reconciled to their lot, and so a Christian and Moslem population amalgamated, like the Romans and the Sabines, and lived in harmony together.

In the year 1611 an unfortunate attempt was made to expel the Turks. A bishop dreamed that he saw the Sultan rise up on his throne at Constantinople to greet him, and gave out that this portended his reign in Jannina. He collected some followers and attacked the Turks, but was speedily defeated, and his skin was stuffed and sent to the capital, where the Sultan, excited by curiosity, rose to look at it, and so completed the prediction of his dream. From that time the Christians lived in more abject subjection to the Turks than in any other part of the empire.

Jannina carries on a considerable traffic with Russia, Venice, and Malta, and is famous for its

embroidery, skill in ornamenting swords and other weapons, and particularly for its beautiful chibouques. For a long time it was the capital of that extraordinary man Ali Pasha, and attracted visitors from all parts of Europe. It was Ali Pasha who defied the Porte in the first two decades of the last century. The "Lion of Jannina," as he was called, rose to favour with the authorities in Constantinople by his exploits in conquering robbers and brigands. His first great achievement was to subdue the semi-independent Pasha of Skutari-Albania, which secured him the Pashalik of Trikala as a sign of the Porte's favour. To this he added that of Jannina, and he soon made his alliance seem worth the seeking, even to Napoleon and our own Government of the day.

His independence afterwards became undesirable to the Turks, and the result of the siege of Jannina in 1821–22 was the direct factor in producing the Greek War of Independence. Since then a common feature in the houses throughout the Greek-speaking colonies of Turkey in Europe is a daub of Ali of Jannina.

The fall of the citadel of Jannina as a prize to the Greek army is a remarkably fitting climax to the history of the old town, for its name has long been linked with that of the man who first showed what armed resistance could achieve for the subject-races of the Ottoman empire.

Its capture by the Greeks not only represents

one of the greatest successes of the campaign, but it could not fail to have the effect of making the Turks more inclined to treat for peace. At the same time its possession by the Allies was likely to create further difficulties between them and Austria in regard to the delimitation of the boundaries of Albania, also to stiffen the demands of the Allies.

That no time was lost by the Greeks in completing the taking over of Jannina is proved by the fact that as soon as the protocol in regard to its surrender had been signed, General Sontzo was appointed Governor of the city and at once took up his functions, and the Crown Prince made a triumphal entry into it.

This great success, combined with other captures made by the Greeks in Epirus, added largely to the number of Turkish prisoners made by them in the course of the campaign, and the cost of keeping them represents a serious expenditure to their Government.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE FALL OF ADRIANOPLE

The defence of Adrianople by the Turks before it was captured on March 26th constitutes one of the most glorious feats of arms of modern times. Not only had the garrison to contend against overwhelming armies of Bulgarians and Servians, superior artillery fire, and constant assaults, but also against famine, which decimated the large civil population and the brave troops commanded by the heroic Shukri Pasha, and rendered further resistance hopeless.

The Ottoman troops fought like heroes for the second city of their Empire until the last possible moment, and it was not taken by assault without inflicting immense losses on the attacking forces of Bulgarians and Servians, whole regiments and companies of whom were swept away by artillery and infantry fire, as well as by mines.

The siege of Adrianople will be recorded in history as having been even more prolonged than that of Plevna, for it was maintained for 155 days; and it will be remembered as being worthy to rank with the defence of Strasburg, Sebastopol, Paris, and Port Arthur.

The Turks, although defeated, have therefore not been disgraced. It was because of the high place which Adrianople held in the Islamic world that they fought for it to the bitter end. They have thus

saved the prestige of their Empire, and although their dominions in Europe will necessarily be greatly reduced as the results of the war and the mediation of the Great Powers, there is every reason to believe that the settlement which will be effected will conduce more to the peace and balance of power in Europe than any other event in modern times.

The Turks have been forced to recognise the great defects of their military and naval organisation. But they say: "We are a young nation—mere infants in our knowledge of the political freedom of the Western nations. But they give us no chance, no time to effect our reforms. Look at your troubles with Ireland. We have always had a dozen Irelands on our hands. Our soldiers are as brave as ever. The *débâcle* has not quenched our spirits or our hopes. But what can we do in the face of Europe?" This is but a sample of the convictions and conversation of any enlightened Moslem.

Old and Young Turk clamour in the cafés over the merits or demerits of this system or that, but they do not seem able to form a united solid party for either. Their views are narrow and shortsighted rather than broad and generous in matters political.

It is with great regret that I have been compelled to record the reverses sustained by a really noble and generously disposed nation. But they provide a wonderful illustration of the manner in which the visitations of Providence are accepted by Moslems, and should be an object lesson to other races.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR SKUTARI

SKUTARI, the capital of the province of Albania, is another of the three strongholds of Turkey which have made such a dogged resistance to the Allies. It is built on a plain which is well watered by several tributaries of the Boyana River, and many small streams flowing into the Lake of Skutari. The climate is not ideal. Very heavy rainfalls swell the streams, causing them to overflow the country, thus making travelling almost impossible. In the summer the radiated heat from the mountains of Montenegro is almost unbearable.

The chief feature besides the natural grandeur of its mountainous environment is the fortress on the Mount of Tarabosch, which dominates the citadel, town, and surrounding country. This is the key of the position and is the reason of the strenuous attacks by the Montenegrins, whose country shares the lake with Albania.

Montenegro's claims were at first limited to the ownership of the little port of Ricka, thirty miles away, at the northern end of Lake Skutari, which is renowned for its wild beauty, the lofty mountains dipping their bases into its limpid water. Small valleys and hamlets dot the ravines.

After the Turko-Russian War the boundaries of Montenegro were enlarged, and encroached on the borders of the lake, taking in Tabliock, the ancient capital of Albania, of which now only the crumbling ruins of the old fort remain.

The city is divided into two parts. One portion nestles against the old citadel, which stands on a high precipitous hill and is enclosed within crenellated walls. The newer portion is well built, with fairly good streets and squares planted with chestnuts and elms. A tree called Foglet also flourishes here, being peculiar to Skutari. It grows nowhere else in Albania. The wood is most valuable and is bought up by the Italians for the purpose of making whips, and to take the place of whalebone, owing to its pliancy. It is so tough and elastic that it can be twisted into any shape, and when released recovers its natural position.

The splendid defence of Skutari by the Turks excited the admiration and the respect of the whole of the civilised world. The Great Powers exerted their utmost influence to induce the Montenegrins to raise the siege, in order that the city should be incorporated in Albania, which it had been arranged should be converted into an autonomous State. But the Montenegrins made the greatest sacrifices to capture it.

Austria-Hungary was furious, and even threatened if the Great Powers could not bring the Montenegrins to reason to compel the latter to abandon the siege.

An international fleet was sent to overawe Montenegro, and exciting developments and complications were expected when, on April 22, the startling announcement was made that the Turks had been compelled to evacuate Skutari, and that the Montenegrins had taken possession of it amid great rejoicings.

The strongest possible protests were made by Austria-Hungary against the capital of Albania being allowed to remain in the hands of the Montenegrins, and the Great Powers thereupon took stronger action and called upon them to withdraw their troops from the city. This had no effect at first, but afterwards the demand was complied with and the Great Powers took possession of it and installed a British Admiral as Governor.

It was then believed that, with Turkey and the Allies willing to accept mediation, and with Bulgaria and Roumania agreeable to the adjustment of their claims by the same means, all further friction could be avoided. But the Balkan embroglio has been at all times full of surprises, and it was feared that the hopes and expectations of the Powers and of Europe generally were to be disappointed and a settlement postponed, when to the relief of the whole European situation the preliminary treaty of peace was signed by the delegates of the Balkan Allies and of Turkey with the London Peace Conference on May 30, 1913, and the war of the Balkan States on Turkey formally came to an end.

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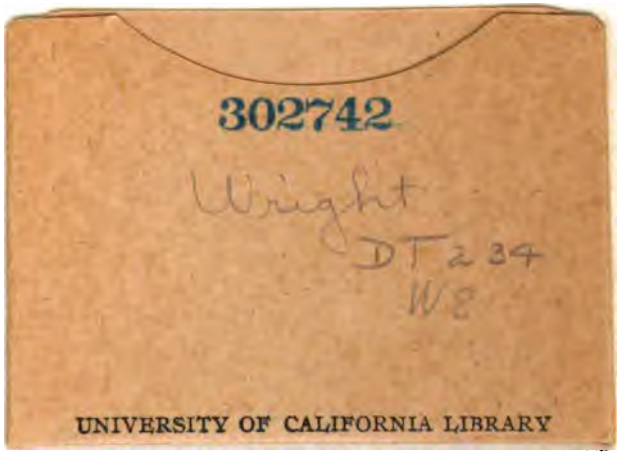
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